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Cover : Pironi and his Ligier dominated the Grand Prix. (Photo A + P).

Grand·Prix international

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GRAND PRIX DE BELGIQUE

OF MEN AND MACHINES

A few days before the Belgian Grand Prix, we were in a bistro talking about mountain climbing when the conversation turned curiously to Formula One. « If you read the specialised press, » said one of the assembled, « you get the impression that the human element has all but disappeared from Grand Prix racing. Everything seems to be about the quality of the material. Doesn't a person's performance matter any more ? »
That's the eternal question ; in what ratio is the personal performance of the driver and the capabilities of the car in the ultimate accomplishment of a good result overall ? Didier Pironi and Nelson Piquet really dominated Zolder and Long Beach respectively, but were they simply the best on the day ? It's not clear, and they know it themselves.
Pironi gave us proof of this doubt during January in Argentina. He had just set the fastest practice time. When we asked him how it had happened for him, he gave the following revealing reply. « I set my fastest lap while really trying, at the same time as Jarier was setting his fastest time. » Jarier, his former Tyrrell teammate, was only 17th quickest.
So does that mean that the car does what the driver intends it to do to varying degress, the two allied irrevocably ? It ought to be true. But human determination persists. Pironi and Piquet went out to devote their lives and efforts to competition, and in competition, winning is the only aim.

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IN THE COCKPIT

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SILENCE THE CRITICS

SIXTH place, that only gets you one point in the World Championship. It's not a lot to get excited about when you looking to win the World Championship. But it can mean something much more important. I have proof of that fact : my sixth place in the Grand Prix in 1978. Finishing « in the points » as everyone calls it, didn't explain everything. I felt much calmer when I got out of the car at the end. I'd just left the Shadow team after three seasons. The team was a lot better off then than it is these days, but I'd never been able to run at the front constantly. In fact I was very uncompetitive towards the end. So it was a revelation for me to drive an ATS into sixth place first time out, especially a private car, and win a point. I'd been in front of Gunnar Nilsson throughout the race, and he was driving a competitive Lotus. Equally I was a long way in front of the Shadows.
That day, my confidence improved. A driver is always trying to evaluate his performance in comparison to other drivers. It's very difficult for a journalist to evaluate a driver's performance or qualities. For the driver himself, it is hard enough to evaluate them, to know what they're worth. Motor racing is a very different type of sport to a running race where all you need is a watch to judge who's quickest over 400 meters for example. There are many factors to be taken into account. They're even so numerous that a driver tends to ask himself questions from time to time as to how good he really is.
It doesn't just happen to me. Didier Pironi proved that for me recently. Last year, he had a bad practice at Long Beach in the Tyrrell. This year with Ligier, he set the fastest times during the first two practice sessions. So he came to see our team, the mechanics, Ken Tyrrell and myself to tell us, roughly speaking, « I'm quickest. You can now think again about my performance last year. » Didier obviously felt the doubt in him, and it had more impression on him than his own confidence. So for him, it had certainly been a tremendously reassuring moment, marvellous satisfication, bordering on relief to know that he could go well in the Ligier. It also lifted the doubt that had plagued him following his poor qualification last year.
So, I'll repeat that it's very difficult for a driver to weigh up his own performance. Even within a good team it's hard to make comparisons with one's teammate. It's hard to judge whether one is quicker or slower than him under such and such a circumstance. One realises this during private test sessions. On occasions, a driver uses two cars, passing from one to the other. But despite driving them in exactly the same fashion, one can be half a second or even a whole second faster in one car than in the other, for no technical nor obvious reason. No one, in such a case, can understand why, when using two identical cars, one is quicker than the other.
This type of situation can really occur. During testing, you hop out of one car into another. You look, you compare, you take times, you watch, and even when trying to drive in exactly similar conditions, there are still time differences. Similar situations can occur during Grand Prix practice, still those inexplicable differences between two cars. One doesn't have the time nor the opportunity to swop cars all the time, but one is judged by the public, the press and the team members despite that one unknown factor : the capabilities of that one particular car. One can't eliminate that unknown factor, because there simply isn't time to do so.
But it isn't just the cars. It's complicated enough as it is : two cars that are identically set up with similar wings, down force, springs, ride height still turn out to be different. What about the engines ? Two can give exactly the same power on the brake and can attain the same maximum speed once in the car, yet they won't necessarily be the same. An engine's quality doesn't necessarily reside in its straight line speed nor in its power figures, but equally in the use of that power. I know from experience that some engines sometimes gain a second a lap without anyone knowing exactly why.
There are many variables. Even the specialists admit to being beaten by the perplexity of the subject. I really consider that one should think twice about passing judgment on a driver, whether it's an immediate view after one race, or an overall opinion. One mustn't form opinions too quickly without first thinking. Maybe the driver isn't on form, perhaps he doesn't like the circuit. There are often many unknown factors which prevent one from making a fair judgment. So silence the critics, it's too easy for them to be wrong. That applies in both the good sense and the bad.

Jean-Pierre Jarier

The paddock in Zolder

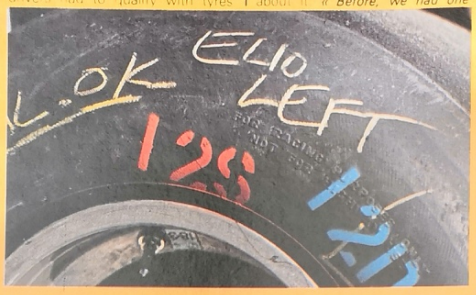
BYE BYE Q-TYRES

It was at Zolder that new rules were effected concerning tyres. Rising costs and technical demands, brought about by the tremendous war being fought between Michelin and Goodyear to be supreme in Formula One, had reached such heights that they threatened the companies' very involvement in Formula One. That's how Goodyear have put it on a number of occasions. But a gentleman's agreement was also made between the two companies.

So qualifying tyres were no longer in evidence at Zolder. Instead drivers had to qualify with tyres because the other one was too soft for Zolder's abrasive surface. So no one really had a choice apart from the Michelin users. That's how Renault, who have more aerodynamic download than Ferrari, opted for tyres which were harder, so sacrificing a little performance for safety.

Technically speaking, we'll have to wait for a while before anyone will comment on the merit of the current regulations.

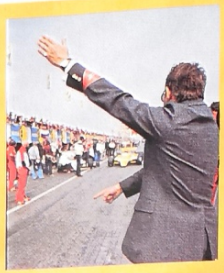
However, it doesn't seem to have made much difference to Michelin, at least on the financial side. Here's what Pierre Dupasquier had to say about it : *« Before, we had one qualifying tyre, and various types of race tyre whose characteristics were all different. Now, we have to make 28 of each type of tyre per weekend per car. That comprises one set for Friday morning, two for the afternoon, the same for the Saturday, plus one for the race. That makes seven occasions a set might be needed, and four tyres per set equals 28. Personally, I don't see any economy in that. »*



which they would use during the race, and this involved a complicated system of marking in order to avoid all cheating. The two manufacturers had been requested to be honest about the markings on the side of the tyres, that they should correspond to the compound of rubber within. Each time a car left the pits, the markings painted on each tyre were checked by four marshals.

The basic rules of the game to be played in Zolder were as follows. During the Friday morning practice session, drivers were able to chose whichever type of tyre they felt would suit them best for the afternoon. Each driver received two sets of tyre chosen during the morning for the afternoon qualifying session. The same thing should have happened on Saturday, with the possibility of chosing a different type of tyre to that chosen on the Friday. Following those sessions, a preliminary and theoretical grid was published showing the overall fastest times. But the actual grid would not be published until two hours before the race, so that each driver could chose whichever type of tyre best suited the track's conditions. Each driver would be placed on the grid depending on the practice time that he did with the type of tyre fitted to his car for the race.

For various reasons, the expected complications never happened. Firstly it was because it rained on the Saturday which prevented teams trying anything other than the hardest tyre which was used so as to be secure should there be no opportunity to use any other tyre. Secondly, this was because Goodyear only had one tyre that would be usable during practice



tyres that have to be limited, not the number of types. A much better solution would have been to allow people to use only six sets of tyres. Then people would simply practice and decide which tyre was the best to race on. » Mauro Forghieri also commented on this idea, *« the rules have actually reduced our field of experimentation. »* But Jarier's comments reflected the general feeling. *« It's a very good move, making things much simpler. Goodyear can't cheat and introduce disguised qualifying tyres, everyone would see the blistering. And they'd have to warn the drivers. So they won't do it. Everyone has the same tyres. It's a much fairer system for the drivers. »*

Qualifying tyres or no, it was the two Ligiers, Williams, Renaults and one Brabham that comprised the first seven places on the grid. The new rules had done nothing to upset form that has been established since the beginning of the season.

BRABHAM AND BMW REACH AGREEMENT, BUT WHAT'S TO BECOME OF TALBOT ?

Before it's even seen the light of day, the Talbot Formula One project has suffered a severe setback. Negotiations to use the 1.5 litre turbocharged BMW engine were said firmly interrupted by Talbot when the Munich firm refused to allow Talbot exclusive use of the engine.

« It's a bad blow for us, » admitted Hughes de Chaunac, one of Jochen Neerpasch's assistants. *« BMW have done an about face on us just when the agreement was about to be finalised. »* It's simply that the BMW directors have decided to enter Formula One under their own name rather than pass on their know how and engine to another competing manufacturer.

But it quickly became apparent that Talbot had simply changed partners, and that Bernie Ecclestone's Brabham team were to be the beneficiaries. Once again, the Brabham owner had been that little bit more cunning, or quicker than the others. Nelson Piquet and designer Gordon Murray didn't know what was going on, for they only learnt of the deal indirectly through journalists at Donington a week before the Belgian Grand Prix. However, some are already suspecting that Bernie stepped in to prevent another new major constructor from moving into Formula One, which would have lessened his hold on Formula One through FOCA.

However, Talbot have announced that they still intend to continue with their Formula One programme. With which engine ? Corrado Provera, the director of foreign public relations, said that the company would spend some time considering the general state of play until next October so that they could wait for the new engine regulations before deciding which way to go. *« That basically means that there won't be a Talbot Formula One car racing in 1981, »* said Provera.

If one is to believe that that is the case that nothing will be done on the technical side before October, we still find it extraordinary that, in spite of M. Provera's statements, Talbot will wait for the new regulations to be published before making a move. However, it was during March that Talbot and BMW made their announcement saying that they would go into Formula One together, and now that it's fallen apart, no doubt this time the Frenchmen are playing it safe.

What can Talbot do now ? Matra's name quickly springs to mind. We contacted Georges Martin who told us that his team are currently working on an experimental *« V12 cut in two which is boosted, »* in other words, a V6 turbo.

Elsewhere, we heard a rumour that BMW had already delivered an engine to Talbot. Will we see Japanese principles applied in France ?

SHADOW CHANGES HANDS

Don Nichols failed to find a sponsor for his team which would have then put it on safer ground, but now he's sold the team. Teddy Yip, who is already an Ensign shareholder, has bought Shadow along with Englishmen Jack Kallay and John Cooper. Shadow is now dead, long live Theodore Racing. But it already seems that their place within FOCA is in doubt because the financier of the team is no longer the same as previously.

WILL NEEDELL STAY WITH ENSIGN ?

Young Mike Thackwell refused to accept the Ensign drive, so it was Tiff Needell who took over the Ensign left vacant following Clay Regazzoni's accident. Needell is from Weybridge in England and is 28 years old. He's already driven for Unipart before, having raced a March-Dolomite in Formula Three. From there, he went to the Aurora championship, and was second last year at Zolder in a Chevron. He's also driven in Formula Two doing the last rounds in the championship in 1977, 1978 and 1979.

It's still not certain whether Needell will stay with Ensign. Brian Henton turned up at the Belgian Grand Prix having been testing his Toleman F2 car in Italy, and that had prevented him from driving at Zolder, but he may drive the Ensign at Monaco.

FIA GOES FOR SAFETY

During the President of FISA's press conference, he announced the creation of an FIA award for safety on racing cars. A prize of $30,000 would be given to the constructor who had built a Formula One car that most efficiently protected the drivers. The judging would be around June 1, 1981.

RELIABLE WILLIAMS AND LIGIER

Thanks to their second and third places at Zolder, the Williams team were unrivalled in the Castolin-Eutectic reliability trophy in Belgium. The Ligier team still lead the overall classification with 31.5 points, in front of Williams (25 points), Brabham (23), Tyrrell (20) and Fittipaldi (17).

BOOSTING THE TURBO USERS

Following Renault, Ferrari, Alfa Romeo and BMW, there are now further rumours of turbocharged engines making their Formula One appearance in the near and distant future. We are basically thinking of Brian Hart, who is preparing a four cylinder turbo. This could be looked upon very favourably by Toleman whose Formula Two car is currently competitive and who could indeed be found in Formula One next season.

Furthermore, Frank Williams has talked about the possibility of Leyland building a turbocharged engine. *« I would be lying if I didn't say that we have spoken on the subject to Leyland, »* said Frank. *« But we were basically talking about general ideas. They could make one, but I can't speak for them. Frankly, I hope that they will manufacture an engine, and I don't reckon that it's impossible. »*

THE PHANTOM ALFA

There were never more than three cars under the Alfa Romeo team canopy in the Zolder paddock. There were actually four cars, but one of them kept disappearing as though it was only a mirage. Yes, there were three normal cars, plus a new chassis with a new engine. The engineers, however, weren't entirely in tune with one another, for sometimes they spoke of three cars, and sometimes of four. The mystery no doubt orginated because Brambilla had initially been entered, but he hadn't turned up. *« It's technically impossibly for us to prepare four cars, »* explained team manager Carlo Chiti. But there were four cars there, even if they didn't want to admit the fact.

ZOLDER'S REWARD

Although the official orange and lemon prize giving is taking place at Monaco, IRPA took the opportunity of their stay in Belgium to give their orange prize for circuits to Zolder. It appears that the good organisation in 1979 and their helpful attitude to press and TV earnt them the prize.

BRIEFING BOYCOTT

There weren't many drivers present at the compulsory briefing by Jean-Marie Balestre on race day morning. The Ferrari drivers were there, so too were the Alfa Romeo, Renault and Arrows men, plus Derek Daly. The rest, it seemed, had been asked to boycott the affair by Bernie Ecclestone who had apparently wanted to make the briefing part of the political struggle between himself and Balestre. Those drivers who missed the breifing are liable to a $ 2 000 fine, a penalty suggested by FOCA following the sparse rostrum in Japan a few years ago. FOCA apparently said they'd pay the bill for the 15 drivers who missed the briefing, but it's going to be a lot of money, and some FOCA members are surely going to say that their drivers attended the briefing so, why should they pay ?

RIO : BASIL TYE REACTS

Jean-Marie Balestre held a press conference at Zolder in order to clarify some of the points made by the executive committee of FISA when it met in Rio (front deformable structure, banning of moving skirts, raised minimum weight etc.), and to ratify the plenary committes of the FISA.

Basil Tye has disputed the result of the vote by the executive committee because he says it had been against Balestre's wishes. The latter during his press conference was adamant that there was no doubt about the vote and disputed the accusation.

Meanwhile FOCA have stated that they might have legal precedent to take action against FISA following certain decisions that have been taken yet do not adhere to the sporting code.

After the truce of a few months, the unfortunate struggle between FISA and FOCA seems to be in full swing again. However, most people prefer to see struggles on the track, not on the sidelines.

mirror

THE FIRST

All Formula One drivers have at least one common trait : a tremendous will to win. The French are certainly among them. Do you know why ?

Because there are no less than seven of them, and the whole of France is disappointed in their footballers and rugby players. The nation's eyes are on their Formula One team. It's a team that exists in name only of course. Take Pironi and Arnoux for example. Do you really believe that they were perfectly sincere when they signed as number two drivers ?

No, of course not, because like their number one drivers, they have one aim that is firmly fixed in their heads : to be the first French World Champion in motor racing.

Jean-Marc André

LIGIER AND PIRONI GET THEIR REVENGE

The Ligier team had to get their own back. Last year they narrowly missed winning, although their bad luck was really in doubt. Furthermore, this year's closely disputed races have left a sour taste in the mouths of the French team, principally because they've so nearly had some good results, but not quite. Didier Pironi has also needed to establish some success, if only to regain his self confidence and wipe out the memory of his first two unsuccessful seasons. So the Belgian Grand Prix was important for the Ligier-Pironi duo, a moment of revenge.

by Eric BHAT

They had a right to be happy. They hadn't won for a year.

A defiant fist wave at his past ? well, Didier did have problem passing Derek.

Pironi won from flag to flag. He did his job perfectly.

Lionel Hublet, nicknamed Yo-Yo, is the Ligier team's chief mechanic,Gerard Ducarouge's right hand man. On Thursday afternoon, he was weighing up his team's chances for the forthcoming Grand Prix. Smiling broadly, he was obviously hopeful for the coming weekend. *« Things are looking good for us, »* he reckoned. *« We have just done some testing at Paul Ricard, and we've compared out times with those of Piquet in the Brabham. On the 3,3 kilometer circuit, we were half a second quicker, and on the bigger circuit, it was nearly a second. Of course the track conditions might have been a bit different, but all the same, things are looking good. We might even end up winning a... »*

So the Belgian Grand Prix looked to be within reach of the French team, just as it had the previous year. But then the situation was slightly different. Guy Ligier had decided not to establish any hierarchy between his two drivers, Jacques Laffite and Patrick Depailler. Consequently, the drivers set out for the season as rivals rather than partners, and together they fought over the World Championship. And that possibly cost them victory at Zolder. Racing for the lead, they used up their tyres early in the race. Patrick then crashed, and Jacques' handling got so bad that he could do nothing about Scheckter who was climbing up through the field, and took first place and a certain win from Laffite.

A year later, this episode still haunted the team. There was no chance of it happening again, for things had much improved since then, but it was a bad memory which had to wiped out. The best way of doing that would be to win. And only that would obliterate the bitter taste of victory lost in 1979.

The contrast between the nervous tension of that period which reached its zenith at Zolder, and the current self-confidence one year later perfectly illustrates the transformation in the Ligier team. This tension has diminished by many degrees. The roles of the first and second drivers are black and white for Laffite and Pironi, but they don't explain how Ducarouge and his men have

found peace of mind. It's just that the team itself have made progress in their method of working.

« Last season toughened us up, » says Ducarouge. *« There are always lessons to be learnt from failure. We learnt what it requires to try and win the World Championship, how much work is necessary, and the mistakes one must avoid. That's experience. We're a lot tighter now. »*

The team may now have reached the ultimate in experience, but that is also true on the technical side, according to Ducarouge. *« We understand the problems a lot better now. We appreciate the importance of certain aerodyanamic and mechanical factors, and the relationships they can have to one another. Our setback in the middle of 1979 caused us to go back to basics, to compare a lot of things. Last year at Watkins Glen, we resurfaced. We were competitive. We're continuing to reap fruits year, because we're still at the front. »*

The Ligier JS 11s, which are now JS 11/15 have proved that they're competitive at each race, showing that they're at home on all types of circuit, whether quick or slow. Such suitability guarantees a successful motor racing season.

But in Argentina, the engines kept blowing up. A plug lead deprived Laffite of possible victory in Brazil. They were powerless against the Renaults at Kyalami. *« And then, thanks to a mistake I made, »* says Ducarouge, *« we bungled at Long Beach by failing to make full use of our qualifying tyres. That's a shame. I realise everyone makes their own good or bad luck. But with a just a little more success, Jacques would now be an easy leader of the World Championship. »*

True enough, the Ligier team hadn't won one race prior to the Belgian Grand Prix, even though it had been in a better position than it had been a year ago. The latent promise shown during the early races needed confirmation and satisfaction. Finally it happened, thanks to Didier Pironi who won by as clear a margin as Nelson Piquet at Long Beach.

Didier too, needed to win. Do you know what he said an hour before the race ? His words rung in our ears throughout the Grand Prix as Didier reeled off the laps in the lead. This is what he said : *« I'll learn a lot the day I win a race. I still feel that I'm lacking something which makes the complete transformation. I need to win a Grand Prix, to be able to say with absolute certainty, I can do it. It's crazy to say that, yet quite reasonable because until you've actually won a Grand Prix, there is still that self-doubt that one can actually manage it. It's just a question mark, which I hope will soon disappear. »*

Above all though, Pironi wanted to establish that he is a potential World Champion. That's something that needed doing, for he's now in his third season in Formula One, and his two years with Tyrrell didn't really demonstrate his true potential. At the time, it made him very frustrated. *« The main change as far as I'm concerned, »* he says today, *« is that I've moved from a second rate team which Tyrrell was last year, to a first rate team : Ligier Gitanes this year. It's psychologically important for a driver to feel that he's capable of winning. »* Perhaps Didier is being a little hard on Tyrrell, who after all, gave him the opportunity to get into Formula One in the first place. But perhaps Didier unwittingly blames Ken for the doubts that went through his own mind caused by qualifying well down the grid. Whoever's fault it might have been, Didier nevertheless, didn't seem very competitive. *« My career was basically in doubt last year, »* he admits. *« That was inevitable. Each time one goes badly, and it happened quite often to me in 1979, one asks oneself various questions. When one is objective, one takes into account all the factors which could be to blame, and one of these factors is the driver's capabilities. So there's always that doubt. »*

Pironi's victory in Belgium sealed his integration to the Ligier team in the best possible way. Didier is almost a new man, not because he's proved himself, but because he's now in a situation whereby he can express himself as he wishes.

« One of the things that makes me much more confident than last year is that I'm now helping with the technical sorting of the car. For this reason, I feel a lot better in the car, and I know the car that much better. I understand what it's doing. It reminds me of the time that I was driving in the Formule Renault Europe championship. I was always working on the car myself with the mechanics. I knew what they'd change and what they'd leave alone. It's now slightly the same with the Ligier team. I know the car very well, and everything that's happening to it. Nothing is modified or changed without me knowing, and I know all about the research that's taking place. It's good. I really appreciate the Ligier team for allowing me this access, apart from the fact that it contributes towards success. »

His career as a driver is now a little easier, although his competitivity now consists of a further complication which didn't trouble him previously. *« I'm no more relaxed than I was last year, because I've more responsibilities. I know that there are people who count on me to win, or at least, to do well. It's a little more responsibility than it was last year, because I was really an also-ran last year for most of the time. »*

« The World Championship. I'm thinking about it. »

Success has came to him perhaps a little more than it has to his team leader Jacques Laffite. The World Championship ? *« I think about it all the time, »* he said to the commentator at the circuit after the race. *« I'm now thinking about it more than ever. However, there is still a long way to go. The championship is very difficult and very open. »* Nevertheless, Didier can have confidence in his own capabilities, he's a potential winner, and so is his team, in whom he already has confidence. *« The Ligier people now have a lot of racing experience. Jacques and I drive cars that are very reliable, competitive, well built and which also conform to the highest standards of safety. The latter is certainly most important. »* There is one nagging doubt though. *« On the whole, the team has just a fraction too much self-confidence. We need to be a little more humble, to see things in a slightly less favourable light so that we're not disappointed when things go wrong. We need to be a little bit more on the alert, not to think that things are as easy as they seem. That way we'd avoid making little mistakes. But it's coming right... »*

And if it comes right at the same time as the World Championship ? *« I'm thinking about it, »* said Didier after the race. □

MARIO ANDRETTI

His story is like something out of Charles Dickens. In June 1955, a boat loaded with hopeful Italian immigrants crossed the Atlantic. Twenty three years later, one of them, Mario Andretti, saw his dream come true. He became World Champion. The Chapman-Andretti relationship seemed ideal. The Lotus builder spoke volumes about his number one driver's title-winning season. « The Lotus team wouldn't have been so competitive if it hadn't had been for Mario. » But all good things come to an end. That season has ended, and storm clouds have gathered. Mario told us of his difficulties.

by Giorgio PIOLA

WHAT ABOUT THIS YEAR ? ELIO DE ANGELIS HAS SOMETIMES BEEN QUICKER THAN YOU, AND IT HAS AGAIN BEEN SAID THAT YOU HAVE LOST DETERMINATION.

The situation has developed considerably with today's wing-cars. They've got a lot of downforce and the cars are that much easier to drive. An inexperienced but talented driver can quickly drive a car on the limit. Why ? Because the current cars are very forgiving, unlike those of ten years go. Experience is counting for less and less. Having said that, it must be admitted that De Angelis is quick. He's an intelligent young guy who's very mature for his age. He's certainly a star of the future. He makes the odd mistake but so does everyone when they're starting out.

POLITICS AND THE SAFETY QUESTION ARE CURRENTLY VERY TOPICAL IN FORMULA ONE. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE SUBJECTS ?

We're in a political situation throughout the entire World as we are in Formula One. Personally, I ignore the basic reasons for the politics in motor sport because I don't even understand their source. What interests me and upsets me most is the question of car safety. Naturally, we could always do better but one point has already been made in eliminating the danger of fire. There are drivers who are no longer with us who have paid with their lives for this improvement. If you like, Regazzoni's accident proves that racing cars are now very solidly built. It's a miracle that he's even living after the kind of frontal impact that he suffered.

THIS YEAR YOU'RE COMPETING AT INDIANAPOLIS AGAIN. DO YOU THINK THAT A *WIN IN THE 500 MILES* IS AS IMPORTANT AS A GRAND PRIX *WIN* ?

I missed Indy last year because of date clashes with my Formula One programme. I tried everything in order to get there. We even thought of hiring Concorde. But this year the calendar allows me to do both, which really pleases me. But you just can't compare the two types of winning. All kinds of winning are important for a driver. It's winning in

WHEN YOU WON THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, THE ANDRETTI-CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP WAS CONSIDERED AS SUCCESFUL AS THE CLARK-CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP BUT NOW IT SEEMS THAT THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE. HOW DO EXPLAIN THIS ?

Things are always changing in life. When things don't go well, one suffers psychologically. Everyone tends to blame other elements of the team. The driver blames the car, the team manager blames the driver. So the atmosphere deteriorates. When this happens, you have to be positive and work towards the future and improve morale in the team. When that happens, things automatically improve.

TWO YEARS AGO, YOU FIRST DROVE THE LOTUS 79 HERE AT ZOLDER, AND IT WAS A COMPLETE REVELATION, SCARCELY A YEAR LATER, A NUMBER OF TEAMS HAD MANUFACTURED CARS THAT WERE BETTER THAN THE 79. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN ?

Colin Chapman wanted to make a car that was one step further developed, and he wanted it to be that much better than all the others because he thought everyone was going to copy the 79. Personally, my hopes rested with the 80, but the car never went well. Halfway through the season, we realised that it would be better to revert to the old 79. By that time, though, it was really out of date. We worked hard on the car, but it was in vain. That was very depressing. We slaved away for nothing.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT YOU WEREN'T AS KEEN AFTER YOU'D WON THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE PROOF IS PERHAPS THAT REUTEMANN WAS OFTEN QUICKER THAN YOU WERE. WHY WAS THAT ?

My determination to win races has never diminished. My World Championship win belongs to the past, and I always look to the future. Reutemann is certainly a quick driver but he wasn't always quicker than I. You must realise that sometimes our mechanical equipment was different. I worked a lot with the team on developing new mechanical solutions, and sometimes I paid for the fact by being uncompetitive. When we were both working with the old 79, we both had different set-ups. Sometimes his set-up worked better than mine, and sometimes it was the reverse.

YOUR STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE TEAM SCARCELY IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH CARLOS.

That problem arose from an interview which I gave to a Swiss paper which published the article under a sensationalist headline, and it really upset Carlos. Finally, I tried to explain what I'd said with Carlos, and with an English journalist who always advises him. But he didn't want to listen. He didn't know what to believe and he was really upset, which wasn't really justified.

the first place that's important. It's the same whether it's in Italy, Africa or Russia.

ARE YOU DISAPPOINTED NOT TO BE RACING AT MONZA THIS YEAR ? AFTER ALL, THAT'S WHERE YOU FIRST LEARNT OF RACING.

I'm a driver and I race on the circuits I'm told to race on. But I'm also sentimental. Monza has a whole history behind it. I've nothing against Imola but I don't think that this year's Italian Grand Prix will have the same atmosphere as at Monza. Like Nurburgring, Monza has enormous prestige.

MONACO IS THE NEXT GRAND PRIX. DO YOU LIKE STREET CIRCUITS ?

Yes, it's fun. There's an atmosphere at Monaco which has all but disappeared at other circuits. I was really surprised when they put forward a similar plan for Long Beach. I really like to be driving close to the spectators, somehow it creates an atmosphere of its own. However, at Monaco, the speed isn't so great that it becomes dangerous.

YOUR SON IS NOW 18 AND APPEARS INTERESTED IN MOTOR RACING. WHAT'S YOUR VIEW AS HIS FATHER ?

He's meant to be concentrating on his university studies at the moment. But he races karts on occasions. I was very pleased that there wasn't a kart race at Long Beach as had been suggested because that would have been dangerous. My son doesn't see the danger. In some ways he reminds me of how I was when I was his age. The cars in which I first raced could scarcely be described as cars.

WHY DO YOU STILL RACE ? ARE YOU THINKING OF RETIRING ?

Things have changed a lot since I first started racing. The competitive spirit is the only thing that still drives me on. Racing just because one likes it is ridiculous. Taking incredible risks without getting decent results is really demoralising. That's the only thing which could cause me to retire. I'm going to weigh up the situation at the end of the year and then I'll decide what I'm going to do in the future.

BUT YOU'RE STILL IN FORMULA ONE AT THE MOMENT, ALTHOUGH THE LOTUS 81 STILL DOESN'T SEEM VERY COMPETITIVE. WHAT ARE YOU HOPING FROM THIS SEASON ?

The Lotus 81 is a very simple car, a lot more simple than the 80 which was an innovative car and was complicated as a result. To sum up, the 81 is an ideal car – for last year. It went well in South America but it hasn't really lived up to our expectations. However, it has been very useful for the team because we now know in which direction we should go in order to build a new car which should appear at the British Grand Prix. Maybe then we'll start to be competitive again.

THE FILM OF THE RACE

The winner, Didier Pironi, led from start to finish. Second man home was Alan Jones who stayed second from flag to flag. Carlos Reutemann held on to third from the 38th lap to the finish. It makes the Belgian Grand Prix sound like a boring event. But that's not true. It was quite a lively race, partially thanks to Rene Arnoux who snatched fourth place right at the end from Jean-Pierre Jarier.

1

1. Pironi has come off better than Jones at the start. He goes into the first corner in the lead, in front of the Williams followed by Laffite, Reutemann and Arnoux.

2

2. First time round and Pironi has already pulled out a little from Jones who is himself a few car lengths ahead of the rest.

3

3. It's all over for Jochen Mass, the second retirement of the race following Jabouille (second lap).

4

4. Behind the leading trio, Reutemann leads the second bunch with Depailler trying hard to stay in touch with them...

5

5. ...but the Alfa Romeo driver spins in the hairpin and loses eleven places.

6

6. Pironi is alone in the lead. Behind him, Laffite tries hard to catch Jones.

7

7. Further back, Arnoux attempts to find a way by Reutemann. Piquet and Jarier follow closely.

Didier Pironi's big day

IT rained on Saturday, on this flat land and its circuit. The starting grid for the Belgian Grand Prix was determined by the one official session on Friday afternoon, which turned out to be one of motor sport's better moments. That was partially because of new rules governing tyres. They had to be race tyres so the drivers tended to stay out on them and try to improve their lap times. Previously, with qualifying tyres, once the qualifying tyres had been used up, there was little point in trying to set a quick time. The second reason was that there were lots of quick laps, and the grid constantly changed.

Pironi started things off shortly after the session had started, and then René Arnoux took over with a time of 1'21"80. Depailler got in there too and set a 1'21"45. But Pironi fought back, improving by a few hundredths and then Jabouille stepped in with a decisive 1'20"46. But that wasn't the end of it. Pironi got below the 1'20" barrier for the first time, and it seemed he'd got pole position with 1'19"35. After a couple of false alarms by Nelson Piquet and Jan Lammers who were credited with quicker times which were then annulled, it appeared that Pironi was poleman. But everyone was still out on the track trying their best to improve. Jones got a good tow on his last lap when driving the spare car, and pipped Didier as the chequered flag came out : 1'19"12. Laffite was third quickest, Reutemann was fourth fastest in the same spare car as Jones. The Renaults shared the third row of the grid having set identical times : 1'19"89.

It rained almost throughout the next day. So the previous day's practice times turned out to be those which made up the grid. But the wet day certainly held some interest. It allowed drivers who were handicapped by their machinery in the dry to show their true worth. Mass, Watson, and Jarier, and to a lesser extent De Angelis, Prost and Lammers all did well and upset normal form. The first two were third and fourth in the morning, and Jarier was third quickest in the afternoon.

But Jones was still the man to beat. He set the quicker time in each of the sessions. Villeneuve, on the other hand was somewhat disappointing considering his legendary car control. It might have been due to the fact that the Michelin rain tyres used on the Ferrari were inferior to new arrowhead Goodyear tyres which had been developed from similar tyres used on motorcycles.

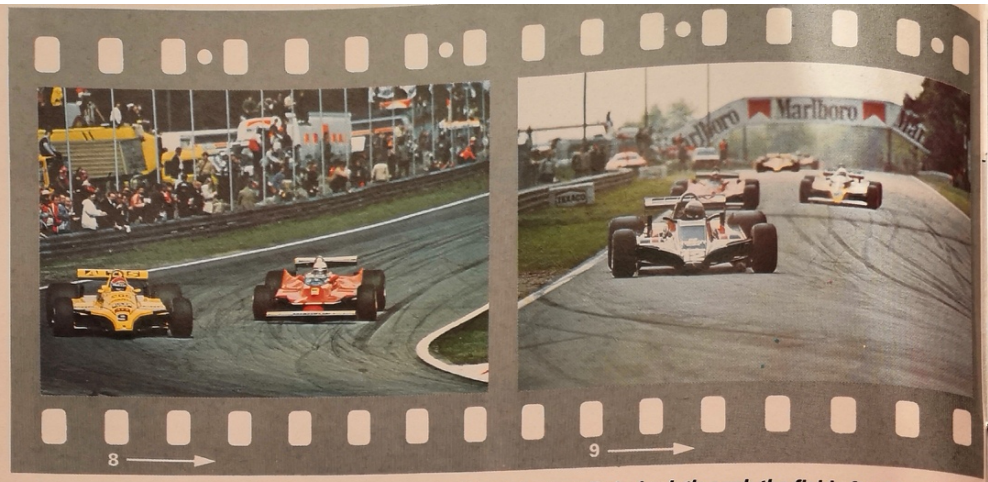
THE RACE

It was Pironi who got the jump on Jones when the green light came on. He took the lead of a race that he was going to dominate from flag to flag. Jones, Laffite and Reutemann were right behind him going into the first corner. Jean-Pierre Jabouille was right at the back and basically out of the race. He'd felt something go in the clutch on the line and just covered one slow lap before pitting for good.

It was soon apparent that Didier Pironi's day had come. After just one lap he already had a couple of lengths lead over Jones. He began to pull out nearly half a second a lap, proving the superiority of the Ligier. Only Jones and Laffite, running in tight formation, were able to pull away from the rest. Carlos Reutemann was leading the others from Arnoux, Piquet, Jarier, De Angelis, Villeneuve and Depailler. At least, that was the order on the first lap. The others had already dropped back.

There were soon a couple of incidents. Mass went off the road at the first corner of the second lap, and Depailler spun at the hairpin on the third lap. By now there was a definite pattern to the race. Pironi was out in front followed by the Jones-Laffite duel. Then came the first bunch led by Reutemann from Arnoux, Piquet and Jarier, followed by another bunch comprising De Angelis, Villeneuve, Lammers, Daly, Scheckter, Andretti and Giacomelli. Patrese, Watson, Prost, Rosberg,

→

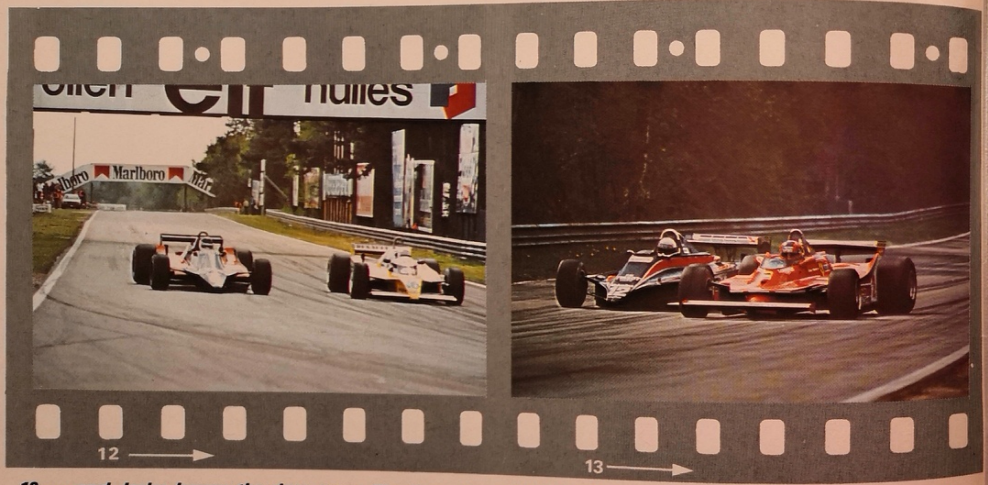


8 →

9 →

8. There was a duel in mid-field where Lammers held up Scheckter for a long time.

9. Arnoux climbs back through the field after his spin. He's passed Scheckter and Lammers and now looks to pass Villeneuve...



12 →

13 →

12. ... and Jarier leaves the door open. The Renault takes fourth place.

13. De Angelis tries the same thing on Villeneuve at the hairpin. Sixth place is at stake...

Zunino, Depailler, Needell and Fittipaldi completed the field.

Pironi continued to pull away from Jones who was still being trailed by Laffite. However, the Frenchman was to drop back slightly for he began to have brake trouble around the fourth lap. Behind him, Reutemann had his work cut out to stay ahead of a hard-charging Arnoux while Piquet and Jarier watched not far behind. There were more battles further back : between De Angelis and Villeneuve, Lammers and Scheckter, Daly and Giacomelli, Andretti and Patrese, and finally Prost and Depailler, both suffering brake trouble. Watson stopped early on for the same reason, Fittipaldi and Needell brought up the rear but both were soon to retire.

Jacques Laffite began to drop back quite definitely letting Jones pull away. Arnoux, on the other hand, kept up pressure on Reutemann until the 17th lap when he lost concentration for a split second and spun. Without Arnoux to worry him, the Argentine soon pulled away from Piquet too, although Jarier still followed the Brabham closely. René fell back to eleventh place, but quickly overtook Scheckter and Lammers and would soon catch Villeneuve.

Laffite, meanwhile, was still suffering. His brakes were fading more and more as the race continued. Reutemann began to catch him and overtook on the 38th lap, just after half-distance. A lap later, Jacques pitted to have his brakes bled. He restarted five laps behind the leaders. His car was by that time absolutely perfect, and he took fastest lap of the race.

Arnoux impresses the public with his drive

10 →

11 →

10. ...but he has to wait until the 53rd lap before overtaking the Canadian at the first chicane.

11. Jean-Pierre Jarier's Tyrrell is the final obstacle in Arnoux's race. He has a go at passing him at the first chicane on the final lap...

14 →

15 →

14. ...but Villeneuve resists and this is how the Lotus ends up.

15. « Bravo Monsieur Pironi. » « Bravo to you Mister Jones. See you in Monaco. »

His teammate continued to enjoy perfect conditions. His seven second lead on the 20th lap grew to 11 seconds by half distance, and then went to 15 seconds by lap 50. But Jones's handling was getting progressively worse. The front left tyre had really suffered which was causing the Williams driver to lift off. By the time the race was over, the Williams was nearly 50 seconds behind Pironi's Ligier which crossed the line with no real problems and had scarcely been challenged throughout the race.

Reutemann earnt his third place, the final driver on the same lap as the winner, but he too had handling trouble and his gearbox was also causing him problems. His great threat had been Piquet, but the Brazilian disappeared on the 33rd lap when he braked a fraction too late at the slippery first corner and locked his brakes, ending up wrapped up in catch fencing.

Arnoux was the man to provide the action in the later stages of the race. He finally managed to get by Villeneuve on the 53rd lap of the race, and in ten laps he'd caught Jarier. He tried various ways to get by his compatriot which kept the crowd interested, but even though he dropped back slightly towards the end, it was then that he managed to overtake by standing on the brakes on the very last lap at the first chicane pinching fourth place from the Tyrrell.

Villeneuve won the final championship point. De Angelis tried to take sixth place off the Canadian Ferrari driver on the last lap, but Villeneuve fought back and the young Roman driver found himself in the catch fencing. Seventh place went to Rosberg whose Fittipaldi was well set-up if not particularly quick.

The rest had problems. Scheckter finished a long way back with no brakes. It had taken him a long time to get by Lammers, but he succeeded on the 20th lap with the coincidental help of Arnoux who held up the ATS driver shortly after he'd overtaken him. The young Dutchman didn't finish, however, because his gearbox failed. Daly finished, but his brakes had given him trouble for most of the race. Certainly Zolder had lived up its reputation of being hard on brakes. It was twice as bad as Long Beach, according to some drivers. □

Zolder statistics

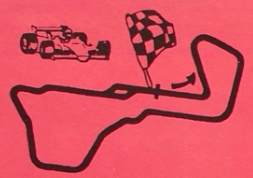
BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

Date : May 4, 1980
Circuit length : 2.648 miles
Race distance : 72 laps, 190.673 miles
Conditions : mostly cloudy
Attendance : 70,000 spectators

THE RECORD

(last five races)

1975 : Lauda (Ferrari 312 T)
1976 : Lauda (Ferrari 312 T)
1977 : Nilsson (Lotus 78)
1978 : Andretti (Lotus 79)
1979 : Scheckter (Ferrari 312 T4)



STARTING GRID

JONES Williams FW07/B 1'19"12	**PIRONI** Ligier JS 11/15 1'19"35
LAFFITE Ligier JS 11/15 1'19"69	**REUTEMANN** Williams FW07/B 1'19"79
JABOUILLE Renault RE23 1'19"89	**ARNOUX** Renault RE24 1'19"89
PIQUET Brabham BT49 1'20"23	**DE ANGELIS** Lotus 81 1'20"96
JARIER Tyrrell 010 1'21"36	**DEPAILLER** Alfa Roméo 179 1'21"45
DALY Tyrrell 010 1'21"51	**VILLENEUVE** Ferrari 312 T5 1'21"54
MASS Arrows A3 1'21"55	**SHECKTER** Ferrari 312 T5 1'21"58
LAMMERS ATS D4 1'21"72	**PATRESE** Arrows A3 1'21"75
ANDRETTI Lotus 81 1'22"07	**GIACOMELLI** Alfa Roméo 179 1'22"20
PROST McLaren M29B 1'22"26	**WATSON** Mc Laren M 29C 1'22"57
ROSBERG Fittipaldi F7 1'22"97	**ZUNINO** Brabham BT 49 1'23"18
NEEDELL Ensign MN180 1'23"50	**FITTIPALDI** Fittipaldi F7 1'24"22

Non-Qualified :
LEES (Theodore DN 12) 1'24"37
KENNEDY (Theodore DN12) 1'24"64
CHEEVER (Osella FA1) 1'40"06

TIMES IN UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE

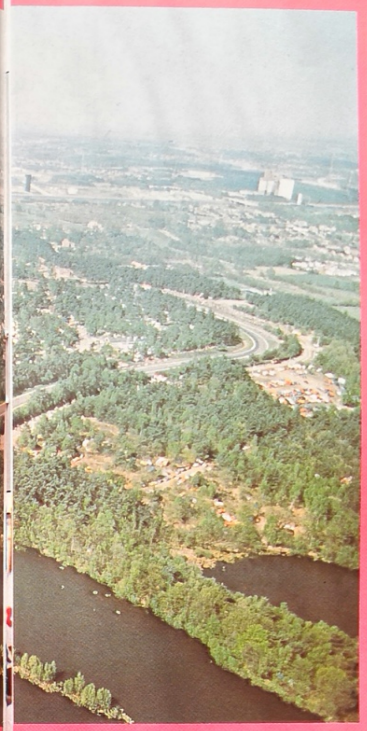
	Friday morning	Saturday morning	Sunday morning
JONES	1'21"76	1'42"83	1'22"69
PIRONI	1'20"72	1'44"47	1'22"42
LAFFITE	1'20"90	1'43"95	1'23"04
REUTEMANN	1'20"58	1'43"10	1'23"05
JABOUILLE	1'21"56	1'46"63	1'23"62
ARNOUX	1'22"02	1'45"15	1'22"96
PIQUET	1'21"37	1'46"20	1'23"64
DE ANGELIS	1'25"36	1'44"26	1'24"22
JARIER	1'22"63	1'47"25	1'23"67
DEPAILLER	1'21"72	1'47"61	1'24"60
DALY	1'23"12	1'50"88	1'24"54
VILLENEUVE	—	1'44"39	1'23"95
MASS	1'22"48	1'43"32	1'24"43
SCHECKTER	1'23"24	1'45"81	1'23"43
LAMMERS	1'22"98	1'44"96	1'25"07
PATRESE	1'24"52	—	1'23"49
ANDRETTI	1'23"03	1'45"04	1'25"14
GIACOMELLI	1'22"78	1'45"94	1'23"71
PROST	1'22"70	1'44"77	1'25"14
WATSON	1'23"38	1'43"54	1'25"86
ROSBERG	1'25"98	1'46"39	1'24"94
ZUNINO	1'23"28	1'57"24	1'27"17
NEEDELL	1'24"93	—	1'27"09
FITTIPALDI	1'26"00	1'48"07	1'26"02
LEES	1'25"07	1'52"79	—
KENNEDY	1'25"62	—	—
CHEEVER	1'23"81	1'50"17	—

OFFICIEL PRACTICE TIMES

	1st session	2cnd session
JONES	1'19"12	1'28"81
PIRONI	1'19"35	1'29"66
LAFFITE	1'19"69	1'35"84
REUTEMANN	1'19"79	—
JABOUILLE	1'19"89	1'31"14
ARNOUX	1'19"89	1'34"11
PIQUET	1'20"23	1'36"48
DE ANGELIS	1'20"96	1'40"83
JARIER	1'21"36	1'29"71
DEPAILLER	1'21"45	1'39"73
DALY	1'21"51	1'37"52
VILLENEUVE	1'21"54	1'34"50
MASS	1'21"55	—
SCHECKTER	1'21"58	1'35"73
LAMMERS	1'21"72	1'33"87
PATRESE	1'21"75	1'33"87
ANDRETTI	1'22"07	1'33"71
GIACOMELLI	1'22"20	1'31"08
PROST	1'22"26	1'31"01
WATSON	1'22"57	1'30"64
ROSBERG	1'22"97	1'32"30
ZUNINO	1'23"18	—
NEEDELL	1'23"50	1'33"97
FITTIPALDI	1'24"22	1'46"09
LEES	1'24"37	—
KENNEDY	1'24"64	—
CHEEVER	—	1'40"06

THEIR FASTEST RACE LAPS

	Time	Lap N°
Laffite	1'20"88	57
Pironi	1'20"94	56
Jones	1'20"97	54
Arnoux	1'21"33	63
De Angelis	1'21"81	68
Patrese	1'21"89	51
Jarier	1'22"25	66
Rosberg	1'22"34	56
Reutemann	1'22"35	54
Piquet	1'22"51	31
Villeneuve	1'22"62	46
Scheckter	1'22"84	32
Lammers	1'23"33	36
Watson	1'23"48	44
Depailler	1'23"51	31
Daly	1'23"62	58
Andretti	1'24"06	35
Giacomelli	1'24"18	5
Prost	1'24"89	27
Fittipaldi	1'26"16	11
Needell	1'26"83	8
Zunino	1'27"06	2
Mass	1'38"00	1
Jabouille	1'44"38	1



PIT STOPS AND RETIREMENTS

Jabouille : retired 1st lap, clutch.
Mass : crashed, 2nd lap.
Depailler : stops on 22cnd and 36th laps, brakes, retired 38th lap, broken exhaust.
Zunino : retired fifth lap, oil on clutch.
Watson : stops on 7th and 31st laps, brakes.
Giacomelli : collision with Andretti 1st lap, retired 12th lap with resultant broken suspension.
Needell : retired 13th lap, engine.
Fittipaldi : retired 17th lap, electrics.
Prost : retired 29th lap, broken driveshaft.
Piquet : crashed 29th lap.
Laffite : stopped 40th lap to have brakes bled.
Andretti : retired 42cnd lap, gear linkage.
Patrese : crashed due to lack of brakes, 59th lap.
Lammers : retired 65th lap, broken gearbox.
De Angelis : crashed after collision with Villeneuve, 70th lap.

PROVISIONAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATION

(After the Argentine, Brazilian, South African, US West and Belgian GPs)

1. Arnoux 21 pts - **2.** Jones 19 pts - **3.** Piquet 18 pts - **4.** Pironi 17 pts - **5.** Patrese 7 pts - **6.** De Angelis, Laffite and Reutemann 6 pts - **9.** Rosberg and Fittipaldi 4 pts - **11.** Daly, Prost and Watson 3 pts - **14.** Giacomelli, Scheckter and Jarier 2 pts - **17.** Mass and Villeneuve 1 pt.

CONSTRUCTORS CUP

1. Williams 25 pts - **2.** Ligier 23 pts - **3.** Renault 21 pts - **4.** Brabham 18 pts - **5.** Arrows and Fittipaldi 8 pts - **7.** Lotus and McLaren 6 pts - **9.** Tyrrell 5 pts - **10.** Ferrari 3 pts - **11.** Alfa Romeo 2 pts.

RESULTS

1. PIRONI	Ligier JS 11/15	72 laps in 1h38'46"51 (115.825 mph)
2. JONES	Williams FW 07/B	47"37 behind
3. REUTEMANN	Williams FW 07/B	1'24"12 behind
4. ARNOUX	Renault RE 24	one lap behind
5. JARIER	Tyrrell 010	
6. VILLENEUVE	Ferrari 312 T5	
7. ROSBERG	Fittipaldi F7	
8. SCHECKTER	Ferrari 312 T5	two laps behind
9. DALY	Tyrrell 010	
10. DE ANGELIS	Lotus 81	three laps behind
11. LAFFITE	Ligier JS 11/15	four laps behind
12. LAMMERS	ATS D4	eight laps behind

Fastest lap : Laffite, 1'20"88, 117.876 mph **(Record).**

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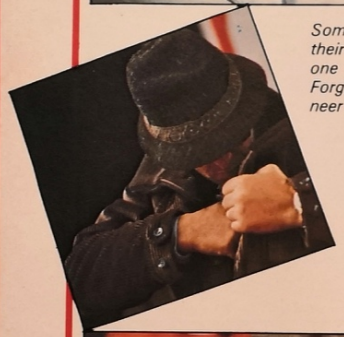
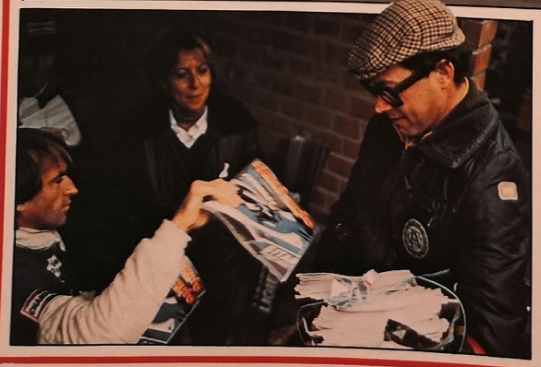
Postcard from Zolder

There's advertising on all fronts in Belgium. The Canon robots are human. That of Coca-Cola, however, is straight out of science fiction.



Some spies are better at their job than others. This one could well be Mauro Forghieri, the chief engineer of Ferrari.



Reine Wisell was once again to be found at a Grand Prix. However, the former Lotus and BRM driver has most recently been racing production cars.

Promotion, promotion. It seems that our great Grand Prix International fan, Jacques Laffite, has found some other type of reading matter.

ZOLDER IN PICTURES

1. Ferrari are still struggling. Perhaps this view explains why.
2. New car, new colour, new name for the Shadows which had become Theodore, and no doubt there are new means too. But any sort of comeback might be considered to be impossible.
3. Jean-Pierre Jarier was one of the stars in the wet practice sessions. In fact he's one of the stylists in Formule One currently.
4. The most colourful moment of the weekend when the pack is bunched up, but it won't be for long.
5. If it's Andretti, it shows that he hasn't lost his enthusiasm. If it's De Angelis, it's confirmation of his impetuous temperament. You chose which.....
6. Carlos Reutemann on his way to third place. It was his first time on the rostrum for nearly a year.
7. You live dangerously in motor racing. We're not talking about the Formula One drivers, so often considered kamikaze pilots, but the people who cross the track in front of a racing car doing 120 mph.
8. Patrick Depailler : he must wait a little longer.
9. The Grand Prix, lap by lap.

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GOODYEAR
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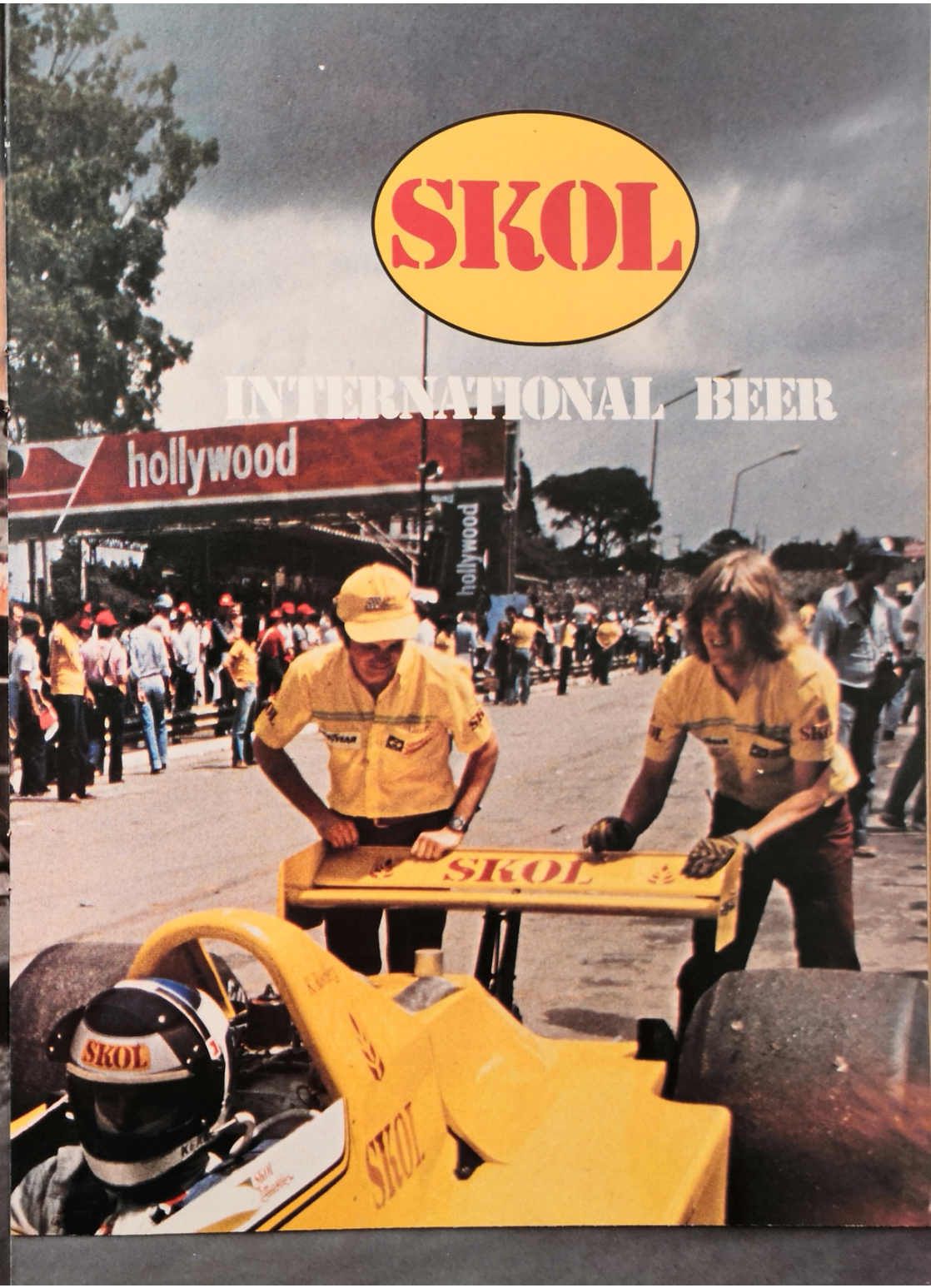
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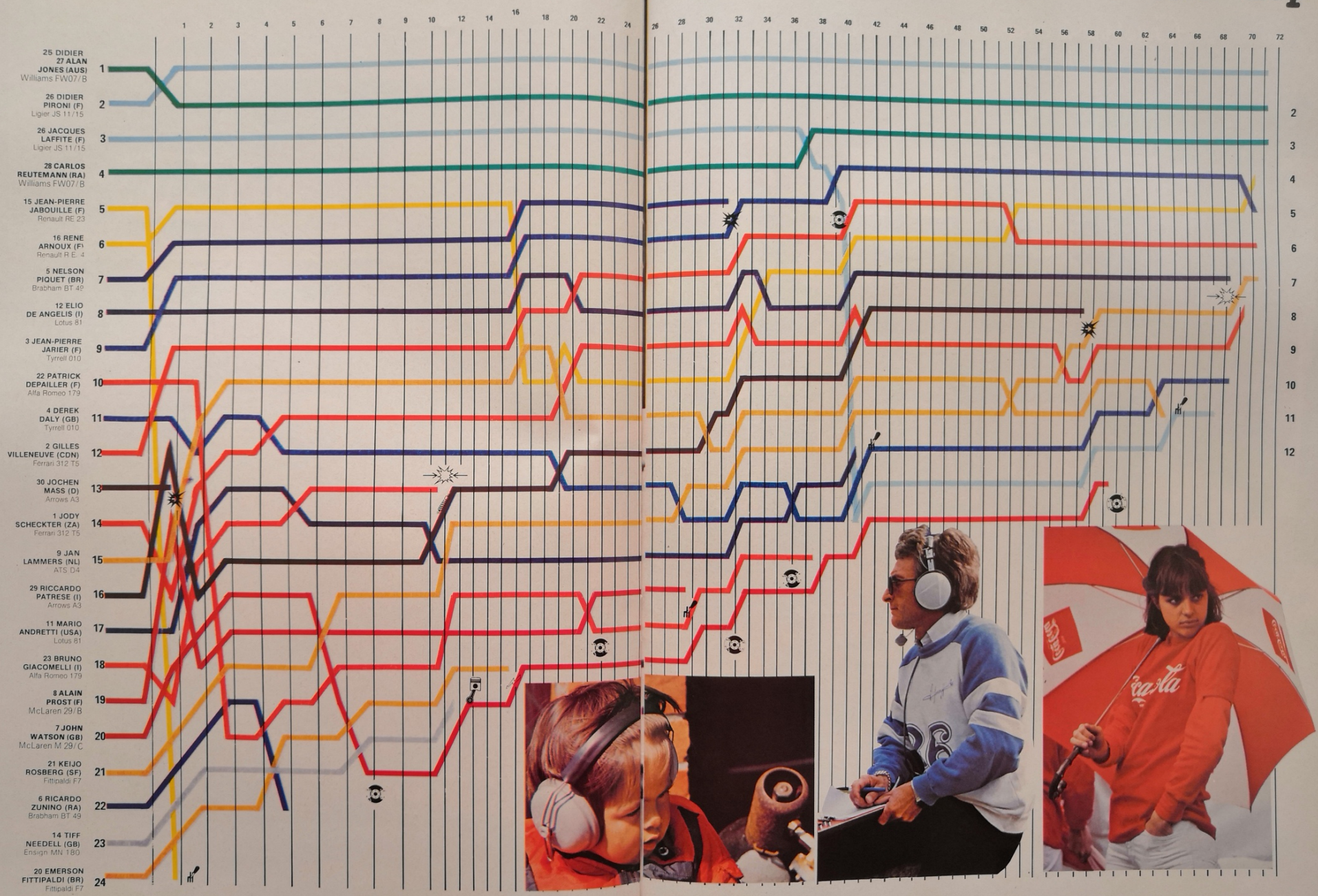
Lap by lap - Giro per giro - Runde um Runde - Tour par tour - Vuelta a vuelta - Lap by



Lap by lap - Giro per giro - Runde um Runde - Tour par tour - Vuelta a vuelta - Lap by

Gute Häuser erkennt man nicht nur
an der Speisenkarte.

Das einzig wahre
Warsteiner

Postcard from Zolder

Now that the Grand Prix scene has returned to Europe for the summer, the big artics are back on the road again. These are those of Ferrari, Lotus and Arrows, and they will be much used during the following months.

Pierre Dupasquier.... .....or Pierre Blanchet ?

The Belgian ladies were somewhat more dressed than their South American counterparts.

The Pomme Frite Grand Prix : yes, it's the land of the chips and mayonnaise, and much work goes into the taste and tradition.

LONG BEACH EXTRA

RENE ARNOUX : CHASING POINTS

WE were on the 63 rd of the 72 lap Belgian Grand Prix. Rene Arnoux's Renault had been taking a second a lap off Jean-Pierre Jarier, and now he was right behind the Tyrrell. The car's rear suspension was almost all he could see. But the hardest moment was still to come. Climbing through the field, gaining ground, inch by inch, that was relatively easy. But actually overtaking, that was a different story, especially with the super short braking areas of ground effect Formula One cars.

But Arnoux was at Zolder for exactly that reason. He had to win points, as many as possible, taking into account the disadvantages of his Renault turbo. If he could win this duel, there would be three points for fourth place. Three little points weren't to be sneezed at. They could be all important at the end. Arnoux is the type of fellow to realise that fact. He wouldn't make any economies, nor would he make any gifts.

But René not only had that on his mind, he had the immediate memory of his 17th lap mistake on his mind. He'd been chasing Heutemann who had problems getting the right gears. He'd given Reutemann the occasional fright, but the Argentine hadn't given way. Rene was getting frustrated. When trying to overtake the Williams driver, Rene had accelerated a fraction of a second earlier than normal. It was too early. The back end of the car went into oversteer, and then slid round. He quickly lost six places in a cloud of blue tyre smoke. That was a disadvantage, certainly, but one of his skirts had broken and 50 centimeters of aerodynamic help were missing. But at least he was still going.

One panic was enough. He had to fulfil his own personal aim which he'd set himself before the start, and which would be equally impoartnat at Monaco and in Spain, two more circuits which would be unfavourable. Arnoux simply couldn't allow himself to make such mistakes. And one doesn't push one's luck tince in a short time. Furthermore Jarier wasn't one to give up easily.

The duel was becoming quite heated. Arnoux's Renault had bigger brakes inside its new 15 inch wheels which allowed him to remain on terms with the Tyrrell. The superior acceleration compensated for the lack of grip from the broken skirt, and subsequent loss of ground effect.

René put into effect a well known manœuvre. *« I showed myself in his mirrors often and everywhere. On the last lap, I concentraded on coming out of the corner before the straight behind the pits as quickly as possible. I drew alongside him and then dived for the inside under braking for the chicane. I was amazed because I thought he'd brake into the left to block me off. But no. Even so, it was fairly difficult for me. I took a small risk and it came off. »*

Three points plus 18 meant 21, he was now sole leader of the World Championship. Arnoux was delighted as he stepped from his car's cockpit. But there was one question he needed answering. *« The Brabham in the catch fencing at the end of the straight, is it Piquet's ? Oh good, what happened to him ? Brakes ? »* It was good news for René. He'd been able to hold the Brabham driver at bay during the early laps, but his subsequent spin had placed everything in doubt. Then the Renault driver began to regain ground. Arnoux has really come into his own with a tremendous period of success. He seems to know where he's going, he remains calm and unflustered, as though he knows what's going to happen.

And what about Jean-Pierre Jabouille ? His clutch broke on the start line, which just added to a long list of reasons why he's the most unlucky driver for the past 12 years. His record almost rivals that of Chris Amon back in 1968.

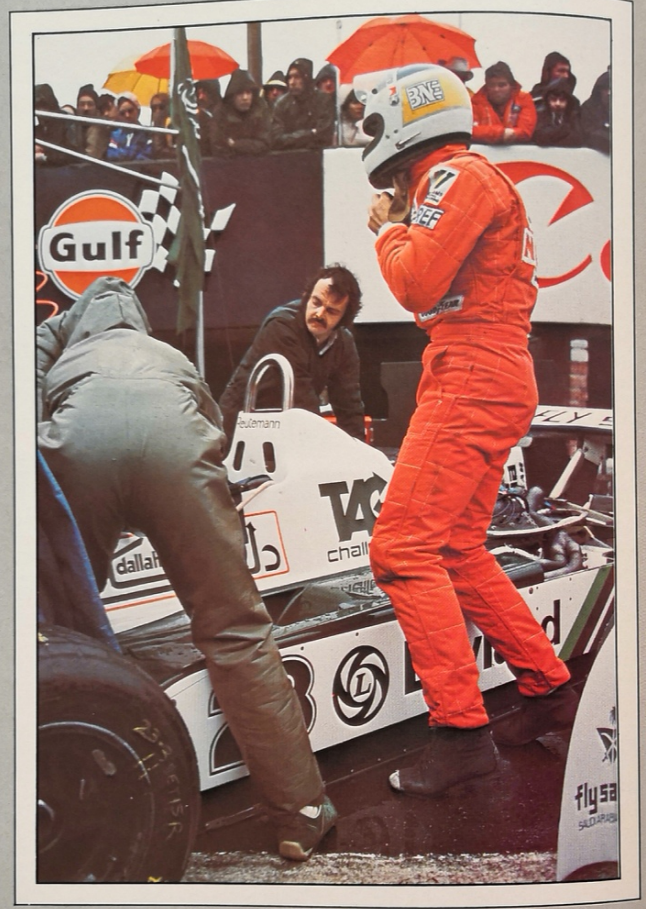
However, Jabouille wasn't that unhappy and he followed his teammate's race with good spirit. Aftewards he asked Rene about the car's handling, the tyres and the brakes. Jean-Pierre had put his own disappointment from his mind. *« What's the point of feeling sorry for oneself, »* he asked ? *« It's so stupid that I prefer to laugh about it. »*

René had been entirely happy with his Renault's brakes, which were the weak spot of the car. *« Did you really use them hard, to their maximum, »* asked Michel Tetu after it was over. René laughed. *« And how ! They couldn't have been better. They were almost better at the end than they were at the beginning. »*

So there was some real hope the Renault team with the demanding circuits of Monaco and Jarama in prospect.

LONG BEACH EXTRA

WILLIAMS COMEBACK ?



WOW, it's been a long time since I've mounted a rostrum ! » Carlos Reutemann looks cheerful, his eyes are clear and wide, he's obviously savouring this moment. Normally he is a little sombre, but that's not the case now. His happiness is infectious, he's relieved to rediscover success. He's just finished third, which has brought to an end a period of bad luck which has lasted since the Monaco Grand Prix 1979.

His race hadn't been without problems however. *« The car was understeering. And then the gearbox started to worry me. I couldn't get second and third gears without some difficulty. »* That put the Argentine driver in a delicate position, for often he would come into corners without gears. It was in these conditions that he was able to hold back Arnoux — with success — during the first part of the race, and then do the same to Piquet. Once the Brazilian had dropped out, Carlos began to catch Laffite's Ligier which was in trouble with failing brakes. Reutemann overtook Laffite on the 38th lap, and once past, his third place was certain, providing his car finished.

Reutemann easily drove to the chequered flag and succeeded in his aim.

In the narrow Williams motorhome which was crammed with journalists, Alan Jones was also reliving his race, sitting not far from Carlos. His race had scarcely been inspiring, but he'd kept second place from flag to flag. *« Well, I've picked up six points that I didn't get at Long Beach »*, he said. *« But there was nothing I could do about Pironi's Ligier. It was a little faster than the Williams everywhere, especially in the faster parts of the circuit. The brakes were fine, but I had quite a lot of understeer. The front left tyre had gone right off. »* Turning to Carlos, Alan asked him : *« did you have understeer as well ? »* Carlos scowled, *« yes. When it's like that, the more you attack, the worse it gets. »*

The two teammates obviously get on well together. They've formed the Williams team for five races now, Jones as team leader and Reutemann as his second in command, a role he appears to have completely accepted. Franck Williams is obviously delighted.

« I'm very happy and proud to say that Carlos has fitted very well into the team, which doesn't always happen », said Frank. *« And I think he's happy to be with us. I don't regret my decision to have him in the team in the slightest. Alan agrees with me. I spoke to him in London on Monday before we went to Zolder. I hadn't seen him for some time, but out of the blue, without any prompting Alan said : « I must say, Frank, that I'm really happy to have Carlos in the team, because he's helping me a lot. » He's a great technical help in our debriefing sessions, and he's completely open. Furthermore, he's very charming and very funny. So far, we've had no problems. »*

The races following Buenos Aires had appeared to be difficult for the Williams team. Jones was a distant third in Brazil. Reutemann was fifth in Kyalami after a stop, and neither car finished at Long Beach. After seeming to be infinitely superior in Argentina, the English cars had appeared to have suffered somewhat. But their superb results in Belgium — second and third places — appears to have redressed the balance.

« I don't agree », argued Frank Williams — with a smile. *« You can't talk about a comeback because we never lost our competitivity. You just have to take other factors into account. In Argentina, Alan was by far and away the quickest, and everyone thought that we were easily going to win the next few races. But this view wasn't entirely accurate, firstly because the car couldn't be competitive everywhere, and secondly because all the teams weren't entirely ready for that first race. »*

In order to support his theory, Frank then ran through each race during the season. *« In Brazil on Sunday morning, Jones and Reutemann set the two quickest times. Carlos, who never exaggerates, told me that the car was marvellous. Unfortunately, he did just 10 yards of the race. Alan was already unwell and finished third. In South Africa, if you don't count the Renaults, our cars were right up with the Ligiers. Williams were still competitive. Like the Ligiers, we were rather misled at Long Beach during practice. Nelson was quicker than the rest of us true enough, but Alan was fastest of the rest. And it's gone well here at Zolder. So you see, we have been the only team to be completely competitive in all the five Grands Prix that have taken place so far this year. »*

— To what extent has Alan Jones's pleurisy held you up ?

« Alan was already ill in Brazil. He went back to his hotel immediately after practice. It was the same thing in South Africa. He was convalescing at Long Beach. It's only here at Zolder that he's really on form. He's joking, laughing, talking a lot : just being a normal Alan. »

The World Championship is naturally still the Williams team's main objective, as it is for their number one driver. But the English constructor is all the more mindful that his task is not an easy one because the competition is stronger than he expected. *« We're very worried about the Renaults »*, he said. *« The bloody Frenchmen are a much bigger danger than we reckoned with. At Paul Ricard, Hockenheim, Zeltweg and maybe at Watkins Glen, they're just going to disappear into the distance. At Monaco and in Spain, on the other hand, we should be very close, maybe a little bit in front. »*

None of the team members are letting up in the slightest. Each person is working hard to overcome the handicap due to the relative lack of power of the Cosworth to the Renault turbo. A B version of the FW 07 appeared at Zolder where it went really well. *« We had a few difficulties getting it right »*, said Williams, *« but Patrick Head learnt a lot from the preceding car, and when he'd weighed everything up, he came up with the current version, and appears to have got it right. »*

A little while ago, Frank Williams promised to speed up the building of the team's new car. However latest news indicates that it won't be ready for two or three months. *« It could be dangerous to speed things up too much »*, he explained. *« You have to consider what impact the arrival of a new car during the season could have, and how it could interfere with other programmes. Even Ferrari have problems trying to get a new engine and chassis going during the season, and this work is obviously affecting the preparation of the cars that they're currently using. We've got to run the racing team, development, prepare our wind tunnel and design and build a new car... and we've got to do it well. »*

He paused, laughed, and added : *« but I have confidence. Patrick's head is bursting with development ideas, as is his drawing board. »* The designer was listening to the conversation, and sagely nodded his agreement.

WAITING FOR GODASSE

When Didier Pironi won the Belgian Grand Prix, he reduced the number of French drivers who have never won Grands Prix to two. Alain Prost was only driving his third Grand Prix race and is suffering certain handicaps. But Jean-Pierre Jarier has some reason to ask when his turn is due.

Once again, Jarier had a fine race to which only he knows the secret. Although the current phase of ground effects tends to mask the qualities of the driver, Jean-Pierre is still one of the great stylists. The only problem is that style doesn't earn victory. The Tyrrell 010 was inspired by the Williams FW 07 as 009 was inspired by the Lotus 79, but they both seem to have suffered the same problem. An all-round lack of grip seems to let down qualities that have made it just the car for last season.

On Sunday morning, Jarier had to deal with what is now quite a famous problem : porpoising, previously suffered by Ligier and Williams. Jarier explains : *« The car dips under its ground effect down-force. It goes further and further down until the air pressure is too great. Then the downforce relieves itself and the car comes back up again, until it starts to sink back down and so on. Needless to say, it's not very comfortable. »*

Although it's just an opinion, it must be said that comfort is not one of the things that make a great difference in Formula One.

Jarier started well during the race and latched on to the South American duo of Reutemann-Piquet. When Laffite stopped, Arnoux had spun, and Piquet had crashed, Jarier found himself in fourth place. Nevertheless, he deserved that position.

But that wasn't counting on the climb through the field by the Renault-Elf driver. Arnoux and Jarier carried out a furious duel, but Jarier was perfectly fair when the Renault carried out its final attack, despite lack of downforce. He simply refused to get involved. *« Pull over to the left and close the door ? I really couldn't do it, »* he admitted afterwards.

But Jarier was still angry. *« It's amazing the difference in power between the Cosworth and the turbo ! At least 100 horsepower more, »* he exclaimed. *« What's the point. Why not just let USAC cars and their enormous engines come into Formula One ? »*

LIGIER-WILLIAMS : IN THE WIND

The Renault team is currently the main threat in Grand Prix racing to the users of the Ford Cosworth engine. For this reason, the latter are working hard on developing their cars in order to minimise the threat from the French cars. Both Ligier and Williams have developed their original FW 07 and JS 11, to the extent that they are now FW 07B and JS 11/15. It is in the aerodynamic department, as is currently fashionable, that all modification has taken place.

by Giorgio PIOLA

WHEN the Ligier JS 11 first appeared last year, it surprised everyone, not least the Ligier team itself, by being immediately competitive. There were many Lotus 79 copies in Argentina at the time, but the Ligier JS 11 appeared to have that little bit extra. The car's secret lay not only in its aerodynamics, but also in chassis rigidity which allowed it to make full use of downforce and ground effect.

However, by mid-season, the Ligier seemed to have lost all its advantage. There were many test sessions, perhaps too many, but they only caused confusion within the French team. The French team learnt from this confusion however, as Ligier's technical director Gerard Ducarouge confirmed. *« In 1979, we sometimes modified the cars by adopting solutions which had given good results in the wind tunnel, but which hadn't been tested during private sessions on the track. You must remember that it was our first season with a ground effect car and that we had a lot to learn in terms of aerodynamics. Now we do things a lot more rationally. We try something in the wind tunnel, then go and test it on the track, and then go back to the wind tunnel in order to have our findings confirmed. Only then will something appear on the car for a race. »*

Consequently, we recently saw an experimental Ligier at Le Castellet, shortly before the Belgian Grand Prix, but it didn't go to the Grand Prix. It may be at Monaco, but only after it has given good results in the wind tunnel at Saint-Cyr which will then be studied by Ducarouge and his team.

The JS 11 has been modified in various different areas on order to make it into a JS 11/15. First of all, the fins in front of the rear wheels were taken off, but they reappeared for the Belgian Grand Prix. Previously, the cars were getting too much front downforce. Ligier have been working hard on various different aerodynamic solutions in order to find the right distribution of downforce on their cars. Progress has been made to such an extent that the nose fins have been taken off on occasions.

The under engine enclosure is very different to that last year, particulary in its relationship to the side pods. The join is no longer rounded. However, the little fins in front of the rear wheels reappeared in Belgium, and the shape of the side pods were altered.

The Ligier's aerodynamics had been improved since the start of the season thanks to outboard brakes and an engine cover that improved air flow towards the rear wing.

WILLIAMS : BETTER

The car that had most changed since Long Beach was the Williams. Patrick Head had initially introduced the B version in Argentina and then South Africa. This car featured an extension of the side pods towards the back of the car thanks to an enclosure around the engine and gearbox. However, a newer car appeared in Belgium with revised aerodynamics.

All three Williams were fitted with new side bodywork which did away with the little fins in front of the rear wheels, and rounded sides similar to those on the Brabhams. The side pod wings had also been reprofiled, and there was a new bodywork solution around the rear wheels which was intended to seperate the side pod air flow and disturbance around the rear wheels. This extended almost to the driveshafts.

The emphasis on improving air flow around the engine included a modification by Cosworth : the fuel pump, formerly placed on the lower left hand side of the engine, had been mounted much higher on the engine. The heat exchangers had also disappeared and had been replaced by an oil radiator which eliminated the water radiator which had previously worked in conjunction the exchanger. □

1. The extractors in front of the rear wheels have reappeared on the Ligier JS 11/15s,
2. Ligier have a new engine cover
3. The same extractor with a tyre fitted. Note the fin and its relationship to the wheel.
4. The side pods extend to the rear wheel and enclose the gearbox but when they appeared in Argentina and South Africa on the FW 07 they didn't give good results.
5. Among the modifications at Zolder was this new item of bodywork, which extends to the ground and excludes the interference caused by the rear wheels from the air flow.

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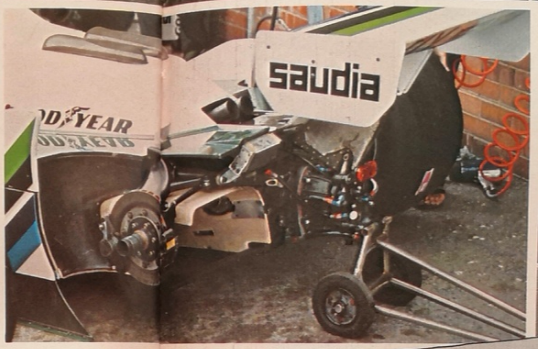

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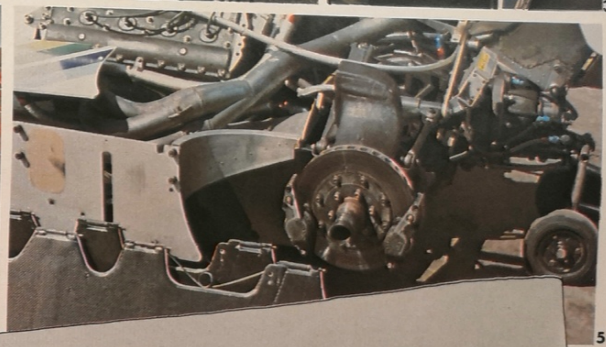
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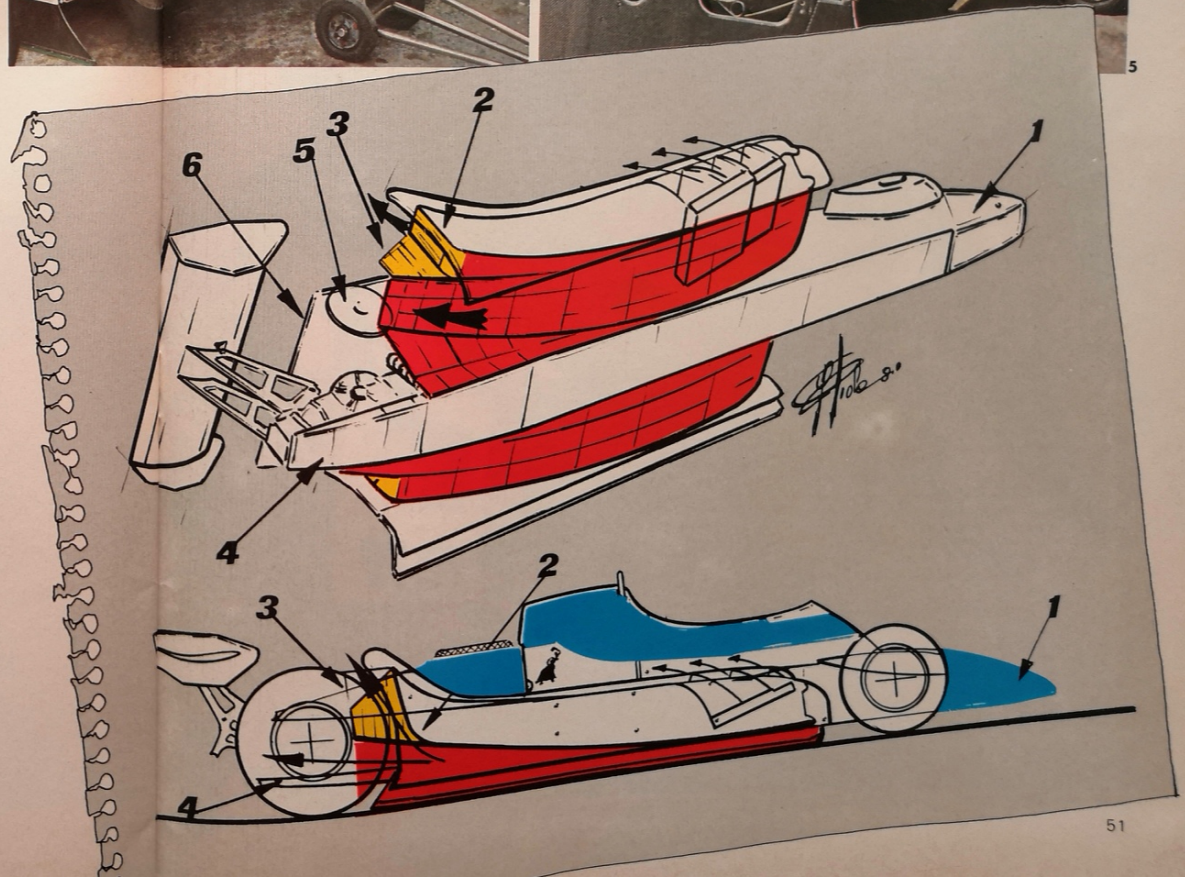
1. The JS 11/15 has often run without front nose fins because the aerodynamic downforce given by the side pod wings is sufficient.
2. In yellow : new extractors which appeared at Zolder, coupled with a new wing profile (in red).
3. The vertical fins beside the rear wheels.
4. Small gearbox enclosure which is different to last year's model.
5. The brakes of the 1980 version are mounted outboard.
6. The upper engine cover is integral.



One of his great hobbies away from cars is powerboating. Here Didier is driving an Abbate. Things technical or speedy attract him.

Sensible or a rascal ? Diligent or ambitious ? Calm or excitable ? Is Didier Pironi an angel or the reverse ?

DIDIER PIRONI : ANGELIC OR WICKED ?

For some, Didier is an angel. His young face, natural charm and his love of life and ability to show instant enthusiasm make people think of their children perhaps, hair well combed, well dressed, who get up to all sort of mischief coming out of school, but who look like perfect pupils.
For others, Pironi is less attractive. They don't see his expression as derisory but insolent. In their eyes, he hides his real feelings very well behind his good manners and apparent innocence.
Whatever, everyone has their own feelings about Didier.

by Jean-Marc Andrié

As with most cryptic people, one's first impression of Didier Pironi is the most important. You either get on with him, or you don't. That's as true for those who are close to him as for anyone else. So when he climbed onto the Zolder rostrum, he gave the impression of having been World Champion then times before. It wouldn't be surprising to find that the many spectators watching their televisions were divided. Some found him over-confident and boastful, and some found him humble.
In fact Didier was giving nothing away because he wasn't feeling anything. He was having to mount the noisy rostrum where he was going to go through the champagne routine and wear the Goodyear cap. He'd already felt the real joy. It had come when he crossed the finish line, in a split second, and he threw his arms up in the air. For a hundredth of a second, happiness was there while he was still alone in the Ligier, protected by his helmet and the noise of his Cosworth. He spent some time bringing his car to a halt after the victory lap, unbuckling his belts and getting out of the car into the thronging crowd. It was as though he wanted to conserve and savour his brief taste of success. He knew that for the next hour, perhaps more, there would be nothing but jostling, people thumping him on the shoulders, people would talk to him who'd never even supported him before. Afterwards it would just be automatic reaction, the repetition of a lesson that is perfectly learnt by a professional : rostrum, interviews, television. As always, Didier carried out his task perfectly. Even though he may have done the job without enthusiasm, he knew how to follow up his moment of glory. It was out of respect for all the youngsters who idolised him, just as he had idolised François Cevert ten years earlier.

But this first Grand Prix win wasn't the same as he'd expected it to be. And it wasn't the same as when he won the 24 Heures du Mans in 1978. He had suffered under the famous bubble top of his Alpine-Renault. The heat was stifling. The gears were getting harder and harder to change. The thought of not finishing was distressing. His teammate Jean-Pierre Jaussaud had been too worried about a mechanical breakage, and had

→

prefered to leave him in the car for the final stint. Finally he crossed the finishing line. Didier fainted. He was carried to the first aid post before climbing up to the famous balcony which acts as the rostrum. Below him, the crowd was delirious. He would never forget that win, because he simply didn't expect it. It was too much of a surprise. He knew that at Le Mans machinery and luck decided where a driver would finish. But it can also be a very important place. He'd qualified as a hero on that day. He felt the kind of joy that every sportsman feels when he surpasses himself.

He'd had another success the previous year which had meant a lot to him. In 1977, he was teammate to René Arnoux in the Martini-Renault team in Formula Two. The previous year René had been beaten to the title by Jean-Pierre Jabouille right at the end of the year, but he wasn't going to let that happen again. René also

benefitted from his greater experience, and from the fact that he was number one driver. In spite of some good results, Pironi realised quickly that the season was going to be wasted. He wanted to be in Formula One the next season, no later. So he set out to accomplish something pretty crazy : to win the Formula Three race at Monaco. That's the race which opens doors to Formula One. At that time, Formula Three was pretty much the province of the English and Italians. Didier was conscious of the considerable risk he was taking. In motor racing, to go down a class and then to fail wouldn't be forgotten. Didier managed to persuade Tico Martini to give him a car, whether competitive or not. But he had confidence in Tico, for he could perhaps get more out of a car than anyone. Then he went off in search of a budget, a decent engine and tyres. The car was just about ready when the little team arrived in the Principality.

Straight from the start of practice, Didier looked to be heading for the front row, and that's where he started from. It's very important to start well at Monaco, and Didier took off like a rocket. He managed to stay ahead of an impetuous Ghinzani who tried a kamikaze operation in one corner when he appeared to forget his braking. Ghinzani's car rode right up on the engine cover and rear wheels of the Martini. Miraculously, Didier stayed on the track and neither the front suspension nor the tyres were damaged. From that moment on, all he had to do was make sure that a certain De Angelis didn't catch him. At the finish, he was so overcome that tears of joy mingled with his sweat.

It was his first international win. Up until then he'd only won Formule Renault races. Didier was brought up in the surroundings of a comfortably off family, and he was soon interested in cars mainly thanks to his cousin Jose Dolhem. Very soon, he was fanatical about cars. At 15, he was playing tricks on motorcycles or in cars in the streets of Paris with an amused Jean-Pierre Jarier was a spectator. Neither probably imagined that one day they'd be driving side by side in the Tyrrell team.

At the age of 20, he won the volant Elf competition. He first had to convince his mother that motor sport was worth more than studying. She loved her son far too much to go against his will. He was determined to motor race anyway. Didier was set for an easy and happy life. But maybe it was for just that reason that he gambled to become what was all but impossible : World Champion Driver.

His early days in racing were difficult because of the competition in Formule Renault. Furthermore, Didier wasn't liked that much on the circuits. People thought him spoilt. It's true that his organisation was of a high standard. Everyone reckoned that his family had given him money. He disputed this fact. But he already drove a Mercedes 450 SE, why shouldn't he when he enjoys good cars ? But he wasn't well liked, only by those who had perhaps asked him for some help and hadn't been disappointed. People prefered René Arnoux, a quieter, more modest man. In 1975, the two of them were intense rivals. In fact they fought so much over the title that Jean Ragnotti nearly won. But in the end it was René who took victory. However, Didier had tried everything. He reckoned that his engine builder prefered his rival, so he hired someone else to everyone's amazement. That man was Daniel Champion, now Renault's chief-mechanic, and together they transformed the Martini completely. They invented the brake balance bar that is today common in all Formula One cars. Didier had already discovered what happens when a car is super stiff which makes it very spectacular, but which requires precise driving. But he could do nothing against Arnoux. Didier thought about getting out of the Elf scene and going to live in England, but in the end he stayed in France and became the Formula Renault Europe champion the following year. At that time, he said *« anyway, I'll come across Arnoux again some time. »* Today, they're four points apart in the World Championship.

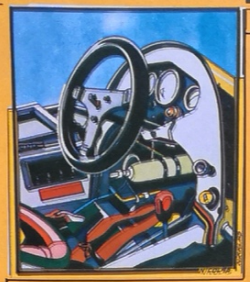
BEFORE that, however, he had to do two years apprenticeship with Ken Tyrrell in Formula One. They were two very long years for him. In 1978, Patrick Depailler imparted some of his experience to young Didier, and he's grateful for that fact. But by the end of the year, they knew too well the weak spots in the Tyrrell team. The 009 was a copy of the Lotus 79 which had been so good. He didn't get on well with it. Furthermore, Renault had entered the scene. Didier rated the turbo engine highly, much sooner than many drivers. And the idea was good too. Larrousse wanted him to join the team as second driver. Unfortunately, Ken Tyrrell wouldn't allow him free from his two year contract. He insisted on keeping Didier, it was perhaps a wrong decision because Didier had already decided to get out as soon as possible, and their relationship throughout the following season saw Didier face up to Ken like a spoilt young kid to an authoritarian father.

« For the first time, my career had taken a backward step, » admitted Didier. Furthermore, the fragility of the 009 made him take silly risks as was shown when he crashed the Tyrrell at high speed at Dijon and the car ended up badly damaged. The wings seemed to fall off, and so did wheels. His only good memories of the season were the battles he had with teammate Jarier because there was no one else to battle with. Didier was sadly disillusioned by Ken Tyrrell, someone whom he'd admired since he was a kid and the great moments of Jackie Stewart.

He showed that he was disappointed too, and Ken probably thinks of him as spoilt. At the end of last season, Ecclestone approached Didier to drive in a Brabham. Didier refused : *« I tentatively agreed to drive for Guy Ligier at the end of the summer »* The latter probably thinks of Didier as angelic, especially after Belgium. □

VOGUE HOMMES
IN THE MAY ISSUE,

ANOTHER VIEW OF
FORMULA ONE.

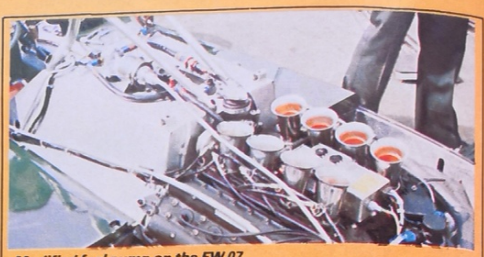


LIGIER GITANES

Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-03 :
Jacques Laffite (F)
Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-04 :
Didier Pironi (F)
Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-01 :
Spare.

The race cars arrived at Zolder in the same aerodynamic configuration as they'd been at Long Beach, although the spare car was fitted with extractors in front of the rear wheels. The two race cars were also fitted with the bigger rear wing, but the front nose fins had been taken off.

The first day of practice went well for the French team. Pironi and Laffite took second and third fastest times. Jacques explained why he was slower than his teammate. It was because of understeer : « ***It will be better tomorrow,*** » explained Ducarouge. « ***We're going to find some improvements.*** » These improvements were extractors which were fitted to the race cars. The Saturday rain meant that they couldn't be tried in all seriousness until the warm-up. Laffite broke his engine. It was changed in time for the race, but that's what caused his braking problem. There wasn't enough time to check the brakes properly, and an air lock stayed in the system. Laffite's brakes soon became spongey and he had to pit to have the brakes bled. Pironi's race was totally problemfree, and he was rewarded with a win.



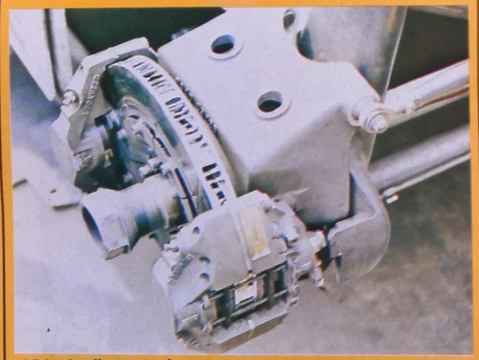
Modified fuel pump on the FW 07.

SAUDIA WILLIAMS

Williams-Ford FW 07/07 :
Alan Jones (AUS)
Williams-Ford FW 07/05 :
Carlos Reutemann (RA)
Williams-Ford FW 07/06 :
Spare.

The new version of the Williams FW 07 seems to be slightly Brabham influenced, for the sides of new side pods are rounded in the same style. The heat exchanger had been replaced by an oil radiator in the left side pod. The new side pods extended to the height of the drive shafts, and this enclosed the area around the rear wheels. On six of the team's V8s, the fuel pump had been moved and modified by Cosworth so that it no longer interfered with the lower engine area. Finally, the rear track was wider.

Both drivers had engine trouble on the Friday. Reutemann was the first to suffer. He took the spare car and then set his quickest time, after which he had to pit and hand over to Jones who'd also had an engine problem. Both race cars showed that they were quick in the rain the next day, running with front nose fins. Understeer held up both cars during the race.



AP brake discs tested.

RENAULT ELF

Renault RE 23 :
Jean-Pierre Jabouille (F)
Renault RE 24 :
René Arnoux (F)
Renault RE 22 :
Spare.

The Renault team had really been concentrating their efforts on the brakes since Long Beach. They'd found a solution which was both efficient and reliable during testing the previous week. This consisted of larger discs and bigger Girling calipers instead of Lockheed. Because of these modifications, 15 inch wheels were fitted on the front. They also had big air ducts front and rear. The latter were fed by air which had come from the side pods.

With these modifications, Arnoux had covered the distance of one and a half Grands Prix during preliminary practice without any problems. Everything went well for Rene during the official sessions, while Jabouille had brake problems still, even though he had the same system as his teammate. The reason was never traced, and in order to eliminate it, the mechanics changed the entire brake system for Sunday, and the problem duly disappeared. The clutch broke during the first few yards of the race, and Jabouille retired. Arnoux was one of the drivers who livened up the race, and he finished fourth.

Oil radiator in place of the heat exchanger.

CANDY TYRRELL

Tyrrell-Ford 010/1 :
Jean-Pierre Jarier (F)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/2 :
Derek Daly (IRL)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/3 :
Spare.

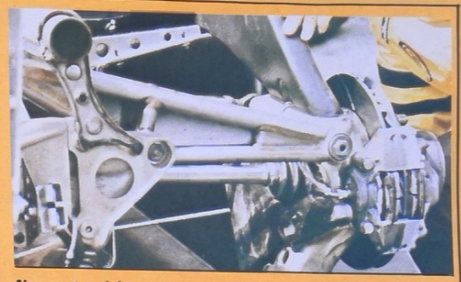
The Tyrrells were scarcely modified for Zolder, although they did use front tyres of 15 inches, and try a new rear wing which was mounted slightly forward of the previous one. But it didn't seem to do any good. The Tyrrells never succeeded in mixing it with the front runners. « ***I did my best,*** » said Jarier after the first sessions. « ***Unfortunately, I only used one of my two sets of tyres, because Ken wanted to keep the other set for the race. We really have a downforce problem in relation to the Williams and especially the Ligiers. I noticed it particularly in the fast corners when the car starts to slide. I lose four to five miles an hour to the Ligiers and Williams without being able to do anything about it. We have to get the car back into the wind tunnel and continue to work.*** » Daly seemed to be in the same situation. Jean-Pierre drove a superb race, while Daly lost a number of places because of his brakes.

FERRARI SPA

Ferrari 312 T5/046 :
Jody Scheckter (ZA)
Ferrari 312 T5/045 :
Gilles Villeneuve (CDN)
Ferrari 312 T5/043 :
Spare.

The Ferraris were fitted with new rear suspension incorporating a new upright which was cast and also acted as a system of cooling the brakes in conjunction with a vertical air duct. There was also a new position for the upright and brakes which were better integrated into the wheels in order to get them out of the lower area of the car's airflow. The Scuderia tried a number of different tests with brakes. Scheckter's car was fitted with AP discs.

The Maranello cars used slightly smaller front tyres although they didn't gain the straight line speed that Mauro Forghieri had hoped for. The 312 T5s couldn't get their Michelin tyres up to temperature. Scheckter was let down by his brakes during the race, while Gilles did what he could and scored his first World Championship point of the year.

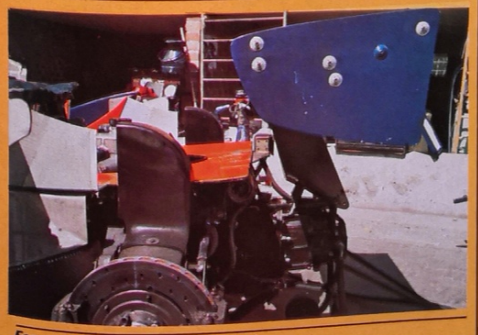


New cast uprights.

SKOL FITTIPALDI

Fittipaldi-Ford F7/01 :
Emerson Fittipaldi (BR)
Fittipaldi-Ford F7/02 :
Keke Rosberg (SF)
Fittipaldi-Ford F7/03 :
Spare.

There were no novelties on the Fittipaldi F7s which, according to those in charge, were no longer competitive. Emerson's team are concentrating totally on the new car which may appear in Spain, but more probably in France. Any development of the F7 has been halted. The cars suffered considerable understeer in slow corners and lacked straight line speed. Rosberg and Fittipaldi were never particularly competitive either in practice or in the race. Nevertheless, the Finn's reliability was rewarded by seventh place.



Forward mounted rear wing tested.

ESSEX LOTUS

Lotus-Ford 81/02 :
Mario Andretti (USA)
Lotus-Ford 81/03 :
Elio De Angelis (I)
Lotus-Ford 81/01 :
Spare.

Two out of the three Lotus cars which arrived at Zolder had the orginal wheelbase. Andretti's race car, however, had a wheelbase that was 7 cms shorter. All three cars were fitted with the new gearbox that appeared at Long Beach. Testing since Long Beach had been sufficiently encouraging for De Angelis to say that « ***we should be considerably better here.*** »

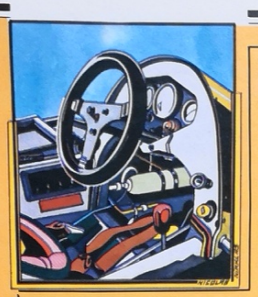
But the Lotus cars weren't that competitive. De Angelis had a valve drop in his engine on the Friday and used the spare during the unofficial session. Andretti tried his shorter race car but prefered the longer spare car which he then used through the weekend. In spite of using a new flat engine cover and new interior wing profile which mounted to the height of the bodywork, the 81s were still not well balanced. The English team are waiting for the new car, which should appear in July.

The old air box was briefly tried.

ATS WHEELS

ATS-Ford D4/04 :
Jan Lammers (NL)
ATS-Ford D4/05 :
Spare.

The spare still hadn't been completed, but it could be if it was necessary. The ATS had done some testing with a new rear suspension designed to improve air flow. The gearbox was narrower and the shock absorbers were mounted closer to the gearbox. The modifications didn't prove very much due to a lack of rigidity and the car appeared in practice in very much the same configuration as it had appeared at Long Beach. The ATS certainly looked more competitive than usual, in spite of a lack of stability under braking. Jan Lammers held up Scheckter for a long time during the race. His gearbox got progressively worse and worse, and firally let him down a few laps from home. The Dutchman will drive the ATS again at Monaco, but after that he's really not sure what will happen.



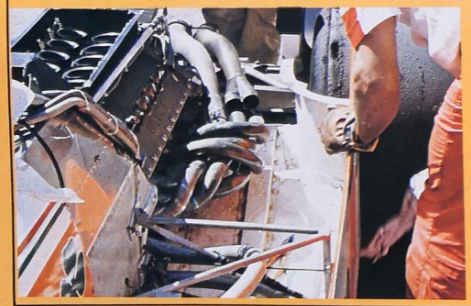
ALFA ROMEO AUTODELTA

Alfa Romeo 179/3 :
Patrick Depailler (F)
Alfa Romeo 179/4 :
Bruno Giacomelli (I)
Alfa Romeo 179/5 :
Spare.
Alfa Romeo 179/1 :
Spare.

The new engine fitted to chassis number five which was also new, made a brief appearance. It was 2,5 cms lower, it was 3 cms shorter and weighed around 25 lbs less than the normal engine. Mechanically, it was basically the same as the well known V12, but a new sump and redistribution of the ancilliaries had resulted in space gained around the lower end of the engine. According to Chiti, the car with the new engine should still weigh around 585 kilos, which is 221bs less than the others.

This car arrived in Belgium having been put through a very brief test session by Alfa's test driver Giorgio Francia. It was briefly driven by Giacomelli and Depailler, but they quickly returned to their own race cars as the rear suspension didn't work properly.

The usual race cars were fitted with brake air ducts and a slightly modified rear suspension. The main problems concerned stability under braking. Depailler's race was a chapter of problems. The brakes disappeared very quickly, then he had a spin on the third lap. He punctured the left rear tyre, stopped to have it changed and then his engine started misfiring. Finally the exhaust broke, a common Alfa Romeo complaint, and the Franchman pulled out. Giacomelli's chances were fairly hypothetical from the start following a collision with Andretti when the American moved over on the Italian avoiding Jabouille's slow car. The suspension was broken and Giacomelli didn't last very long.



PARMALAT BRABHAM

Brabham-Ford BT 49/6 :
Nelson Piquet (BR)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/2 :
Ricardo Zunino (RA)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/7 :
Spare.

The spare was a completely new car, although it wasn't modified at all. Zunino had the task of sorting out the BT 49 which was fitted with the transversal Weismann gearbox. According to the Argentine, the balance of the car has improved since Long Beach. Ricardo was held up on Saturday due to springs that were too hard in the cars.

Piquet's practice went well, but a single day's practice is perhaps not enough to set up the car properly, which is why he seemed to be relatively uncompetitive in comparison to Long Beach.

Zunino used the Weismann transverse gearbox.

THEODORE RACING

Théodore DN 12/1 :
Geoff Lees (GB)
Théodore DN 11/2 :
David Kennedy (IRL).

There was a new car in this almost new team. It was designed by Vic Morris with help from Chuck Graemiger. It turned out to be the shortest Formula One car with a wheelbase of 256,5 cms. It was a new chassis and had new aerodynamics too. Having said that, it doesn't seem much different to the DN 11 in that the preparation leaves a little to be desired. A new Theodore should appear at Monaco. Hopefully, this time it will look a little bit more like a Formula One car.

New DN12 châssis.

WARSTEINER ARROWS

Arrows-Ford A3/04 :
Riccardo Patrese (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/03 :
Jochen Mass (D)
Arrows-Ford A3/01 :
Spare.

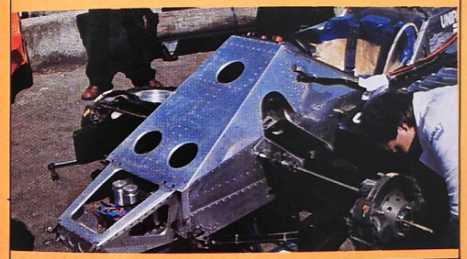
Riccardo Patrese and Jochen Mass both started practice with a longer wheelbase due to mounting the front suspension differently, as at Long Beach. There was the same reason as before, and it had the same effect. The Arrows drivers quickly reverted to the previous wheelbase configuration. They also tried new and higher rear bodywork on Friday morning, which was also discarded. The only novelty which was kept for the race was the extension of the side pods towards the front, although this hadn't really been tested because of the rain on Saturday. Riccardo Patrese, who's used to setting his quicker times on the Saturday, hadn't demonstrated his true qualities during the first qualifying session. In the race, both cars crashed due to brake problems.

Side pods further extended at the front.

UNIPART ENSIGN

Ensign-Ford MN 180/12 :
Tiff Needell (GB)
Ensign-Ford MN 180/14 :
Spare.

The car crashed at Long Beach had been replaced by a new chassis. The only new thing on the car were the slightly advanced radiators and slightly different side pods. The Ensign team didn't reckon that they learnt a lot about the car due to Needell's relative inexperience – it was his first Grand Prix. He broke the engine during the race when he missed a gear changing down.



OSELLA DENIM

Osella-Ford FA 1/02 :
Eddie Cheever (USA).

The Osella had new front suspension, it was lighter by over 30 lbs, and the upper bodywork was slightly lower. The side pods will also be lower at Monaco. Testing had gone well at Le Castellet, but Cheever had the bad luck to crash when following Schecker. The rear suspension broke and he couldn't take part in the official dry session during the afternoon, and that cost him qualification. His mechanics worked hard to get the car into shape. Eddie did his best in the rain, but it was wasted effort.

MARLBORO MCLAREN

McLaren-Ford M 29/2 :
John Watson (GB)
McLaren-Ford M 29/4 :
Alain Prost (F)
McLaren-Ford M 29/1 :
Spare.

The McLaren M29s had been slightly modified in order to trace still elusive competitivity. Testing the previous week had been quite encouraging, but the cars never really featured during the weekend, apart from in the wet when Watson and Prost did particularly well. The uprights had been modified as had the side pods and the rear wing. The cars were theoretically easier to adjust due to the greater range in suspension travel and height of the chassis. Reality didn't reflect this. Watson broke his engine on the Friday afternoon. Both John and Alain had the same problems during the race brakes.

New uprights.

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